CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

VOLUME I

SANDIA ACADEMY

Presented to

**Charter Schools Division
New Mexico Public Education Department
CNM Workforce Training Center, Room 227
5600 Eagle Rock Avenue
Albuquerque, NM 87113**

July 1, 2009

School Information:

Name of Proposed Charter School ___**Sandia Academy**___

School Address (if known) _____To Be Determined_____

School Location (City/Town) _____Albuquerque, New Mexico_____

School District within which the school will be located____Albuquerque Public Schools_____

Contact Information:

Primary Contact Person _____Mellani Murphy_____

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City_____Rio Rancho_____ State__New Mexico_____ Zip __87124__

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Secondary Contact Person _____Ralph Arellanes_____

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Alternate Tel (_505_) _846-0038_____ E-mail_ralph.arellanes@abq.dtra.mil___

Partner Organizations (if applicable):

_____Not Applicable_____

Enrollment Information:

NOTE: If the charter school will be located in a school district that has a total enrollment of not more than one thousand three hundred (1,300) students, the charter school's proposed enrollment for all grades, in combination with any other charter school's enrollment for all grades, will neither equal nor exceed ten (10) percent of the total MEM of that school district [6.80.4.9.C.6 NMAC]

Grade span at full enrollment _K-12_ Total number of students at full enrollment ___500____

Complete the chart, indicating phase-in grades if applicable.

School Year		Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
First Year	2010-11	K-12	500
Second Year	2011-12	K-12	500
Third Year	2012-13	K-12	500
Fourth Year	2013-14	K-12	500
Fifth Year	2014-15	K-12	500

Abstract of Proposed Charter School:

Provide an abstract (summary) in narrative form that succinctly describes the proposed charter school. Include in the narrative, the school's proposed location, grade levels, enrollment, mission, and educational philosophy and approach. This abstract is to be limited to one page.

It is the mission of Sandia Academy to use interactive technology to provide an innovative public charter school education option which meets the individual needs of approximately 500 kindergarten through twelfth grade students in New Mexico beginning in the fall of 2010. The Academy will be a hybrid model: traditional face-to-face classroom instruction combined with distance learning. It will be a powerful model promoting meaningful parent, student and teacher involvement. The School will be governed by a board whose members will have track records which demonstrate successful performance in education, business, and commitment to the State of New Mexico and its communities.

As a public charter school, the Sandia Academy will be open to any New Mexico student, although the Academy expects to primarily attract students within commuting distance of the school's Learning Center (in the greater Albuquerque metropolitan area) including special student populations such as gifted and talented students, students attending schools designated as "needs improvement", those who are struggling academically, those having special needs, and those students in need of a quality educational option. Students will receive daily coursework from New Mexico licensed, highly qualified teachers—both in the Learning Center and when they are studying at a distance from the Learning Center. Academy teachers will work in conjunction with mentors (parents/guardians or any caring adult that the parent or guardian selects) to ensure student success.

Academy students in grades K-8 will complete coursework that will include math, social studies/New Mexico history, physical education, Language Arts/English, science, art and world languages or music. The Academy's curriculum will provide students in grades K-12 multiple levels of World Languages in Spanish, French, Latin, German, and Chinese. The Academy will offer K-8 students sessions at the Academy's facility a minimum of one day per week. High school students in grades nine through twelve will be in enrolled in at least six courses—those required for graduation and electives. Math, English, Science, and History courses will be offered in multiple levels to meet the needs of diverse learners. The Academy will offer high school students sessions at the Academy's facility a minimum of two days per week. The hybrid distance learning program will combine lessons accessed on the Internet with hands-on materials kits. Students will be able to check out a computer and printer for the duration of their enrollment in the school.

Assessment and accountability will be an integral part of the learning program including benchmark assessments at the beginning of the year; individual learning plans for each student; regular diagnostic performance assessments throughout the school year to measure growth; ongoing lesson, unit, and semester assessments to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives in the curriculum; and New Mexico Statewide Assessment Program (NMSAP) tests to demonstrate that Academy students are meeting and exceeding the state learning standards.

III. STATEMENTS OF ASSURANCES

This form must be signed by a duly-authorized representative of the applicant group and submitted with the final application. An application will be considered incomplete if it is not accompanied by the Statements of Assurances.

STATE OF NEW MEXICO)

)

COUNTY OF BERNALILLO)

    I, _____Mellani Murphy_____ , after being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. My name is ___Mellani Murphy_____ and I reside in _Rio Rancho, New Mexico__ .
2. I am the authorized representative of the governing body, or applicant group, for
_____Sandia Academy_____ (*name of school*) to be located at
_____Albuquerque_____ , I certify that,
if awarded a charter:

1. The CHARTER SCHOOL's admission process shall not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, ability level, or age.
2. If more students apply than can be accommodated, The CHARTER SCHOOL shall admit students on the basis of a lottery.
3. The CHARTER SCHOOL's admission processes shall be in compliance with Section 22-8B-4.1 NMSA 1978.
4. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall be a nonsectarian, non-religious, and non-home-based public school.
5. Except as otherwise provided in the Public School Code, the CHARTER SCHOOL shall not charge tuition or have admission requirements.
6. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with all state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools, including those health and safety codes relating to educational building occupancy.
7. The governing body shall not contract with a for-profit entity for the management of the CHARTER SCHOOL.
8. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules related to providing special education services.
9. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall avoid apparent and actual conflicts of interest when administering grants and entering into contracts for equipment and services.
10. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with conflict of interest provisions identified in the New Mexico Procurement Code, Section 13-1-128 et seq. NMSA 1978 and the Prohibited Sales Act, Section 22-21-1 et seq. NMSA 1978; and the federal regulations at 34 CFR 75.525 and 80.36.
11. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall ensure that criminal background checks are conducted on all employees in accordance with Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978.
12. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop written procurement procedures and conduct all procurement transactions in a manner that provides open and fair competition.
13. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI

14. of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

15. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall provide equitable access to and participation in its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

16. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall be economically sound and the fiscal management shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and rules relative to fiscal procedures.

17. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall provide to the Public Education Commission by the sooner of the end of the planning year or within ten (10) days of receipt of any federal or state stimulus funds a detailed plan indicating how the CHARTER SCHOOL will manage its fiscal responsibilities, the plan will include a description of the internal control procedures that the charter school will utilize to safeguard assets, segregate its payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with all applicable federal statutes and regulations and state statutes and rules relative to fiscal procedures.

18. Meetings of the CHARTER SCHOOL Governing Body shall comply with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq., NMSA 1978.

19. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall adopt policies and procedures of the governing body, that address governance, relationship to staff, professional development, the role of the governing body in policy-making, personnel decisions, budgeting, and operation of the school, including how decisions will be made.

20. The Governing Body or head administrator of the CHARTER SCHOOL shall recognize and work with employee labor representatives, if any.

21. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall produce a certificate of occupancy prior to opening a facility for use as a school; the facility shall meet all applicable federal and state health, safety and code requirements and be suitable for use as a school.

22. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop and maintain a plan for addressing code, accessibility, health and safety requirements as well as operation, maintenance and repair of any facility it seeks to use as a school.

23. The CHARTER SCHOOL shall develop personnel policies that comply with all applicable federal and state labor laws, regulations and rules implementing them and shall submit the policies to the Public Education Department for comment prior to the hiring of any employees.

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that I am the authorized representative of the applicant group, or the governing body, of this charter school.

[Signatures required on next page]

(Statements of Assurances page 3 of 3)

_____   _____

     [Signature]   Date

  Mellani Murphy_____, representative of the applicant group, or governing body

member, of the proposed _____Sandia Academy_____Charter School.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this _____day of _____, 20___.

  [Notary Seal:]

_____

[signature of Notary]

_____

[typed name of Notary]

    NOTARY PUBLIC

    My commission expires: _____, 20____.

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.

- **Provide a clear and compelling Mission Statement for the school that includes the following components:**
  - **Who the school seeks to serve;**
  - **What the school seeks to accomplish;**
  - **What methods the school will use.**

It is the mission of Sandia Academy to use technology to provide an innovative public charter school education option meeting the individual needs of kindergarten through twelfth grade students. The Academy will be a hybrid model: traditional face-to-face classroom instruction combined with distance learning. It will be a powerful model promoting meaningful parent, student and teacher involvement. Sandia Academy will develop and enrich all of its students by fostering their desire to be lifelong learners to reach their full potential in life.

- **Provide a response to the following question: How will the school know if it is achieving its mission as stated above? The response must include school level or organizational goals that are measurable and directly support the Mission Statement.** *(NOTE: Specific measurable student performance expectations [student goals] should be addressed in section IV, Educational Plan.)*

To achieve its mission of meeting the individual needs of all of its students, Sandia Academy will need to demonstrate that it has accurately pinpointed student proficiency levels; prescribed appropriate interventions; and is implementing an effective Individual Learning Plan for each student. In order to promote meaningful parent, student and teacher involvement, Sandia Academy will constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation and training provided to each of those groups about their roles on the team and make adjustments to the orientation and training accordingly. The Academy will know that students' desire to be lifelong learners is being fostered as the number of next step plans stating an intent to continue the student's education after high school increases.

- **Provide an explanation of need that describes how the proposed charter school is in the best interest of the students and community that it proposes to serve. Include a demographic description of the student and community population within which the school will be located.**

As a public charter school, the Sandia Academy will be open to any New Mexico student, although we expect to primarily attract students within commuting distance of our Learning Center including special student populations such as gifted and talented students, students attending schools designated as "needs improvement", those who are struggling academically, those with special needs, and students in need of a quality educational option.

Albuquerque Student and Community Demographics and Statement of Need

- In the year 2000, there were 123,696 individuals 19 years and younger living Albuquerque. (City-data.com, 2009)
- The general population of Albuquerque has grown from 450,372 in 2000 to an estimated 518,271. (United State Census Bureau, 2009)
- The Albuquerque metropolitan area population is now estimated at 819,576. (Frick, 2009) It is safe to say that the area K-12 student age population is sizable.
- In 2008, there were 94,643 students enrolled in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS).
  - 55% of the APS students were Hispanic
  - 33% of the APS students were White (not Hispanic)
  - 5% of the of the population were American Indian
  - 4% of the students were Black (not Hispanic)
  - 2% of the students were Asian/Pacific Islander
  (Great Schools, 2009).
- In 2008, 52% of the students attending the Albuquerque schools were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch. (Great Schools, 2009).
- In 2007-2008, the Albuquerque Public Schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the third consecutive year and were designated as in "Corrective Action." Moreover, progress was not met in either the math or reading scores. (New Mexico Department of Education, 2008)
- On May 18, 2009, the Associated Press reported that the graduation rate for high school students in Albuquerque was only 44%. That report drew public statements of concern from both APS Superintendent Winston Brooks and the mayor of Albuquerque, Martin Chavez. ("Superintendent wants to…," 2009)
- Reuters reported on April 22, 2009, that, although during the last ten years many large cities had seen the high school graduation rate increase, Albuquerque Public Schools had seen its high school graduation rate drop 7%. ("High School Graduation Rates…," 2009)
- The Washington Post reported on May 5, 2009, that a study by Save the Children ranked New Mexico as one of the five worst states to prepare

children for success in school and beyond. Also, the same report discussed the importance of school in the very early years of life and how it becomes an indicator for future success:

> Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman shows that the returns on investments in early childhood are greater than investments at any other stage of life. Quality early learning programs – especially those aimed at disadvantaged children – "raise the quality for the workforce, enhance the productivity of school and reduce crime, teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency," said Heckman. "They raise earnings and promote social attachment.

Moreover, the report states that in New Mexico:

> Too many parents are struggling to give their young children the encouragement, stimulus and attachment they need in their early years. And as a result, too many children are starting school ill-prepared to learn. (Fisher, 2009)

- A program that integrates the parents into the education of the students, especially at an early stage of their lives is desperately needed in Albuquerque where 44% of third graders and 49% of fourth graders were not proficient in reading in the 2007-2008 school year. (Great Schools, 2009)
- The previously mentioned Save the Children report stated that during the 2006-2007 school year, over 18,500 New Mexico students in fourth grade were not proficient at reading. (Save the Children, 2009)
- An article in the Winter 2007 *City Journal* declared how crucial reading proficiency is at the early years of school:

> This educational failure bodes ill: children who don't read by fourth grade almost always fall behind in all other subjects, often wind up in costly special education programs, and, as adults, have higher rates of drug addiction, incarceration, and welfare dependency. (Geoghegan, 2009)

- Across the state of New Mexico, only 32% of the schools made AYP in 2008. (Garcia, 2008)
- New Mexico was ranked second lowest in graduation rate in the U.S. in 2006 with a graduation rate of 56.% compared to the national average of 69.2% (Editorial Projects in Education Inc., 2008) (Bradley, 2009)
- Only 31.1% of individuals in Albuquerque over 25 years old have a college degree. (City-Data.com citing U.S. Census) (City-Data, 2009)
- The largest city in New Mexico, Albuquerque, is also its economic center; it accounts for nearly half of the state's economic activity. Part of its success can be attributed to a diverse economic base consisting of government, services, trade, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and research and development. (City-Data.com) (City-Data 2009)
- According to Kiplinger.com, as of July 2009, Albuquerque had a population of 819,576 (Frick, 2009)
- As of June 2009, Albuquerque had an unemployment rate of 7%. This was a substantial increase in the unemployment rate from the previous year at this time (4%) (NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions) (New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, 2009)

- As of 2007, 15.8% of the residents of Albuquerque were living in poverty. (City-Data.com citing U.S. Census) (City-Data, 2009)
- The two largest ethnic groups are Caucasians (49.9%.) and Hispanics (39.9%). Hispanics have double the poverty rate (19.7%) of Caucasians (10.9%). (City-Data.com citing U.S. Census) (City-Data, 2009)
- Kiplinger.com reported in July of 2007 that New Mexico and Albuquerque "crave high-tech jobs, especially in the renewable-energy industry." Who is going to fill these positions if the schools are not producing a workforce ready to meet the opportunities in these technical fields? (Frick, 2009) Sandia Academy is determined to help students be prepared for these new and exciting prospects.
- The College Board in 2008 has reported that the largest demand for employees in the years leading up to 2016 will be for those employees with specialized and technical knowledge gained through college and port-secondary vocational education. Lucido, 2008)
- Sandia Academy will use technology and the Internet as the backbone of the learning of its students. The school will combine technology with proven pedagogical instructional methods to create a bond and partnership between parents, students, and teachers. Communications and individualized learning will use modern mediums to instruct and develop self-learners. These self-learners will become the "knowledge workers" that New Mexico so desperately needs in order to compete in the 21st century. Given the choice, parents will want to have their children have the best preparation possible for the modern world.   As the North American Council for Online Learning stated in it 2008 "Keeping Pace" report:

  > ...changes should focus on increasing high-quality online educational choices and opportunities. We believe that students and parents will recognize the value of true student-centric learning, whether it is fully online or a blend of online and face-to-face, and through their millions of individual choices transform education. (Watson, Gemin & Ryan, 2008)

- The opening paragraph of the *New Mexico Distance Learning Strategic Plan (2000-2009)* states that "eLearning is critical to the success of individuals, organizations, communities, and economies in the knowledge economy (Ruttenbur, Spickler, & Sebastian, 2000). Developing quality eLearning support statewide is imperative to the economic future of New Mexico." (Chavez-Neuman, Correa, Garcia, Holloway, Ivey, Ormand, B., et al., (2007)

- The *New Mexico Distance Learning Strategic Plan (2000-2009)* lists among its long term goals for eLearning in New Mexico to
  - Develop a more skilled workforce to support New Mexico economic development
  - Minimize barriers of location (distance) and schedule (time) to accessing educational opportunities

- Provide highly qualified eTeachers (both in subject and eLearning methods) and expanded course choices for rural (and urban) schools
- Build capacity and skill for eLearning in New Mexico using national best practices

(Chavez-Neuman, Correa, Garcia, Holloway, Ivey, Ormand, B., et al., (2007)

The Academy will address these needs as it is premised on the belief (and experience) that given a comprehensive and mastery-based curriculum, high expectations, state of the art technology, strong instructional support, collaborative community learning, guidance from experienced teachers, and a strong commitment from parents (or other responsible adults), a well-conceived blended education program can help boost student achievement, serve the unique needs of students and families, and offer a new model for effective public education.

A. CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards provide the content requirements and expectations for students in all public schools. The description of the curriculum should provide a sense not only of what the school will teach but also of how and why. (*NOTE: Refer to the <u>Glossary of Terms Used in the Application,</u> page v, to assist in the completion of this section.)* The following components of the curriculum framework must be addressed:

1. Philosophy and Approach to Instruction

- **Describe the educational philosophy and curricular approach of the proposed school.**

Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy of the Sandia Academy is consistent with conclusions reached in reports published by International Association of K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) (Watson, 2008).
- All students deserve access to high quality curriculum and teachers regardless of socioeconomic or geographic barriers.
- Student-centered environments encourage self-directed, self-paced learning.
- In the 21st Century, students utilize technology on a daily basis, learning in an environment that students are familiar with which engages students, fosters creativity and encourages 21st Century skills.
- The future of education involves providing content, resources, and instruction both digitally and face-to-face in the same classroom.

Curricular Approach: K-8

Students in grades K-8 will complete coursework that will include math, social studies/New Mexico history, physical education, Language Arts/English, science, art and world languages or music. Students will receive daily coursework from New Mexico licensed, highly qualified teachers.

The Academy will offer students sessions at the Academy's facility a minimum of one day per week. The Academy may add additional days of onsite attendance if a student requires them and if it would benefit his or her education. K-8 students will attend onsite courses in classes of 20 students. New Mexico licensed, highly qualified teachers will provide instruction. Distance learning classes will have higher student to teacher ratios but will be of a size that teachers can effectively manage and students will successfully continue to learn. The Academy will follow all state requirements for attendance aligning to the Cyber Academy Act for attendance. Parents will receive weekly reports from teachers regarding student mastery of lessons/units during classroom sessions.

Students may participate in test preparation sessions from late February through mid-March. Test preparation sessions will be substituted for art sessions.

Students with Individualized Education Plans will receive accommodations and direct instruction during their classroom sessions. Students with individualized education plans may receive related services at the Academy facility.

Curricular Approach: High School

Primary coursework will include the courses required for graduation and electives. Students will be enrolled in at least six courses. Students will receive daily coursework from New Mexico licensed, highly qualified teachers.

The Academy will offer students sessions at the Academy's facility a minimum of two day per week. The Academy may add additional days of onsite attendance if a student requires them and if it would benefit his or her education. Students will attend onsite courses in classes of 25 students. Courses will be instructed by New Mexico licensed, highly qualified teachers. Distance learning classes will have higher student to teacher ratios but will be of a size that teachers can effectively manage and students will successfully continue to learn. The Academy will follow all state requirements for attendance aligning to the Cyber Academy Act. .Weekly classroom instruction will be provided in four, four hour blocks over two days:

- Four hours on lab science coursework
- Four hours on language arts/reading/composition preparation for the New Mexico High School Competency Examination
- Four hours on math preparation for the New Mexico High School Competency Examination
- Four hours on a series of topics: four sessions of the career counseling program; six sessions on service learning; twelve sessions on transition topics to include job readiness, public speaking, college applications, and other topics; four session on science preparation for the New Mexico High School Competency Examination months; four sessions

on study skills; two sessions on final examination preparation; and four sessions on SAT/ACT and other test preparation .

Classroom sessions will be based on lesson plans within the Learning Management System, state test preparation documents/tools, teacher-developed lessons, and other national test preparation tools. Students, teachers and counselors will develop student-level classroom schedules based on students' academic needs, responsibilities, and lifestyle. Students will be required to maintain their customized classroom schedule for a semester. Students will accrue attendance/absences based on attendance in classroom sessions as well as attendance/participation in distance learning coursework and activities.

Students in tiers two or three of Response to Intervention will participate in regular education interventions during their classroom sessions as determined by their learning plans. Students with Individualized Education Plans will receive accommodations and direct instruction during their classroom sessions. Students with individualized education plans may receive related services at the Academy facility.

- **Describe why the particular educational philosophy and/or approach were selected.**

Distance learning for students in grades K-12 continued to grow in late 2007 and the first half of 2008. Currently 44 states have distance learning programs (*Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning,* Watson, 2008). Three states (Alabama, Michigan, and New Mexico) now require an online course for high school graduation.

The most well established K-12 distance learning programs have now been in operation between five and ten years. Several models have evolved for structuring distance learning K-12 learning programs spanning a continuum from fully Internet-based operating with students and teachers at a distance to programs that are fully face-to-face. The blending of distance learning programs and the classroom setting are becoming increasingly common—no longer a theory, it's in practice in the U.S. and abroad (Watson, Gemin, & Ryan, 2008).

The answer to the next question in this application presents documentation of the success of similar students who are enrolled in distance learning programs across the U.S.—specifically those enrolled in programs using the K^{12} curriculum with its learning management and student information systems. This documentation validates that the stated educational philosophy and approach will address the real needs of the Albuquerque and New Mexico K-12 community.

- **Provide documentation, research, and/or a rationale that supports the educational philosophy and curricular approach.**

Measuring Growth

There is proof in the performance of any school or curriculum. By determining a benchmark for measuring growth at the beginning of the school year; then developing an individualized learning plan for each student; continually assessing students' attainment of the standards throughout the course of the school year; and assessing student performance at the end of the school year—schools can continually measure the "effect" of their educational program on students. Sandia Academy will measure the growth in student achievement in this way. Distance learning schools across the country using the K^{12} curriculum have measured the effect of the K^{12} education program in this way. Using the Scantron Performance Series in mathematics and reading, these schools have measured the gains in achievement of their students from fall to spring and compared those gains, as well, to the gains of the Scantron norm group, a national norm group that reflects national ethnic and income diversity trends.

To summarize the very similar gains of students enrolled in four distance learning schools using the K^{12} curriculum in the 2008-2009 school year in four different geographic areas and with four different student demographics:

- **Chicago Virtual Charter School (CVCS)** *(hybrid distance learning charter school serving grades K-10 in the 2008-2009 school year)*
  - In all instances, CVCS grade levels and reported ethnic groups made more than or very close to one year of gain in math in the 2008-2009 school year.
  - In all instances, CVCS grade levels and reported ethnic groups made greater than one year or very close to one year of gain in reading in the 2008-2009 school year .

- **Texas Virtual Academy (TXVA)** (serving grades 3-8 totally in the distance learning setting in the 2008-2009 school year)
  - In most instances, TXVA grade levels and reported ethnic groups made more than or very close to one year of gain in math in the 2008-2009 school year.
  - In all but one instance with one ethnicity group, TXVA grade levels and reported ethnic groups made greater than one year or very close to one year of gain in reading in the 2008-2009 school year .
  - An "achievement gap" in the math and reading scores noted in the fall among some ethnic groups, narrowed between the fall and the spring.

- **Florida Virtual Academy (FLVA)** (serving grades K-8 totally in the distance learning setting in the 2008-2009 school year)

- o   In all instances, FLVA grade levels and reported ethnic groups made more than or very close to one year of gain in math in the 2008-2009 school year.
- o   In all instances, FLVA grades and reported ethnic groups made greater than one year of gain in reading in the 2008-2009 school year.

- **Arizona Virtual Academy (AZVA)** (serving grades K-12 totally in distance learning settings in the 2008-2009 school year)
  - o   In most instances, AZVA grade levels and reported ethnic groups made more than or very close to one year of gain in math in the 2008-2009 school year .
  - o   In most instances, AZVA grades and reported ethnic groups made greater than one year or very close to one year of gain in reading in the 2008-2009 school year.

Longevity Data

Distance learning schools using K^{12}'s curriculum are among the highest scoring schools of their kind in their states. While many students enter a program using K^{12} curriculum performing more than one year below grade level, the longer they remain in the program, the better their academic achievement. The evidence reflects the positive effect the K^{12} curriculum has on students over time. These results have been achieved despite the enrollment of a significant number of new students each school year who have had limited exposure to the K^{12} learning system prior to taking these required state tests. Students using the K^{12} learning system for at least three years usually perform better on standardized tests relative to state averages than students using it for one year or less.

Student Performance by Year of Enrollment

How did ALL students who have been enrolled for multiple years in distance learning schools using K^{12} curriculum perform on their '07-'08 state READING tests in comparison to first year students?
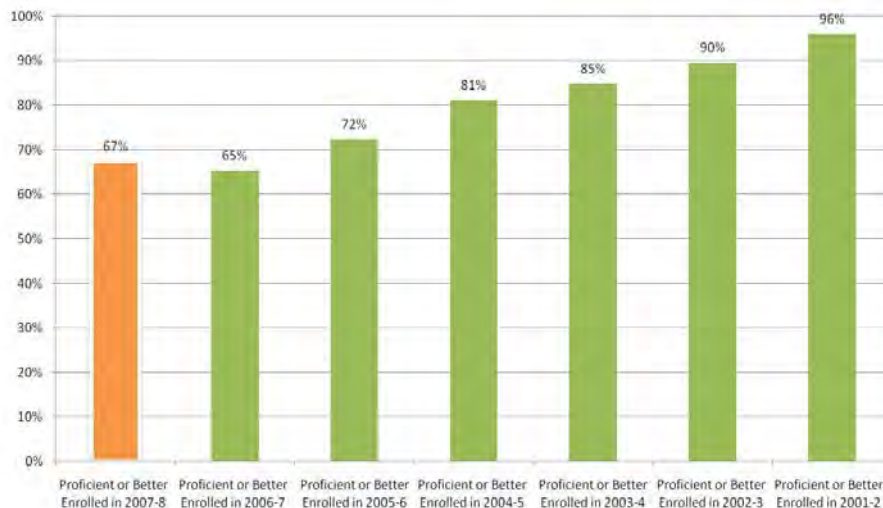
How did ALL students who have been enrolled for multiple years in distance learning schools using K^{12} curriculum perform on their '07-'08 state MATH tests in comparison to first year students?
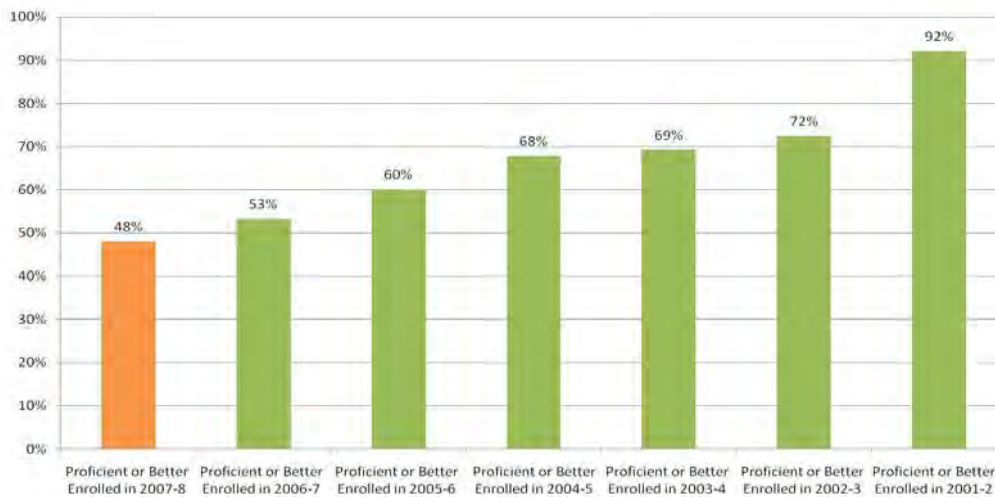
It should be noted that the overall proficiency rate of students who have been using K^{12} curriculum for four or more years is 14% higher in math and 20% higher in reading. (Three years is 5% higher in math and 12% higher in reading.)

Data also reveal a 12% difference in the pass rate for students who have been enrolled in K^{12} curriculum two or more years compared with the pass rate for students who have been enrolled in K^{12} courses for one year, and a 24% difference in the pass rate for students who have been enrolled for two or more years when compared with students who are new to K^{12} courses this year. This pattern is evident across schools and at the individual school level. Compared with other demographic variables, this was the only factor that had a consistent impact on academic achievement. Academic achievement improves as students advance from grade nine to grade twelve, with a 10% higher pass rate for students in grade twelve than for students in grade nine. It is likely that this change is also influenced by increasing maturity and the additional time that students have been enrolled in the program. This pattern is true for many courses.

VALUE ADDED: A COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' 2007 SCORES FROM A DIFFERENT SCHOOL TO THEIR 2008 SCORES AT A DISTANCE LEARNING SCHOOL USING K^{12} CURRICULUM

One true way to know the effect of a program on students is to look at where students were before they entered the program compared to where they are after one, two, or even three years. In some states, a statewide data system with unique student identification numbers makes it possible to retrieve students' prior year test scores. In the 2007–08 school year, K^{12} was able to retrieve these scores from Florida for Florida Virtual Academy (FLVA). K^{12} was also able to review cumulative files of students in the Idaho

Virtual Academy (IDVA) looking for prior year test scores. In both instances, all scores that were found were analyzed and the results are below. This data indicates that the vast majority of students in distance learning schools using K^{12} curriculum are increasing or maintaining the proficiency levels they had at previous schools.

	READING % of students who maintained a proficient score from prior school in 2006-2006 to 2007-2008 at a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum.	READING % of students who moved from being "not proficient" in prior school in 2006-2007 to being "proficient" in a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum in 2007-2008.	READING % of students who increased their proficiency level (i.e. "proficient" to "advanced", for example) and remained proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.	READING % of students who increased their proficiency level but still were not proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year	READING % of students who went from being "proficient" to "non proficient."
FLVA	79.6%	5.7%	15.9%	2.5%	7.6%
IDVA	83.7%	7.1%	10.2%	3.1%	5.1%

	MATH % of students who maintained a proficient score from prior school in 2006-2006 to 2007-2008 at a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum.	MATH % of students who moved from being "not proficient" in prior school in 2006-2007 to being "proficient" in a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum in 2007-2008.	MATH % of students who increased their proficiency level (i.e. "proficient" to "advanced", for example) and remained proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.	MATH % of students who increased their proficiency level but still were not proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.	MATH % of students who went from being "proficient" to "non proficient."
FLVA	65.2%	6.1%	8.2%	1.3%	9.5%
IDVA	61.2	8.2%	14.3%	3.1%	8.2%

	LANGUAGE ARTS % of students who maintained a proficient score from prior school in 2006-2006 to 2007-2008 at a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum.	LANGUAGE ARTS % of students who moved from being "not proficient" in prior school in 2006-2007 to being "proficient" in a distance learning school using K^{12} curriculum in 2007-2008.	LANGUAGE ARTS % of students who increased their proficiency level (i.e. "proficient" to "advanced", for example) and remained proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.	LANGUAGE ARTS % of students who increased their proficiency level but still were not proficient by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.	LANGUAGE ARTS % of students who went from being "proficient" to "non proficient."
IDVA (96)	62.2%	10.2%	5.1%	3.1%	9.2%

Success with Diverse Student Populations

K^{12} curriculum has been successful with several specific groups of students.

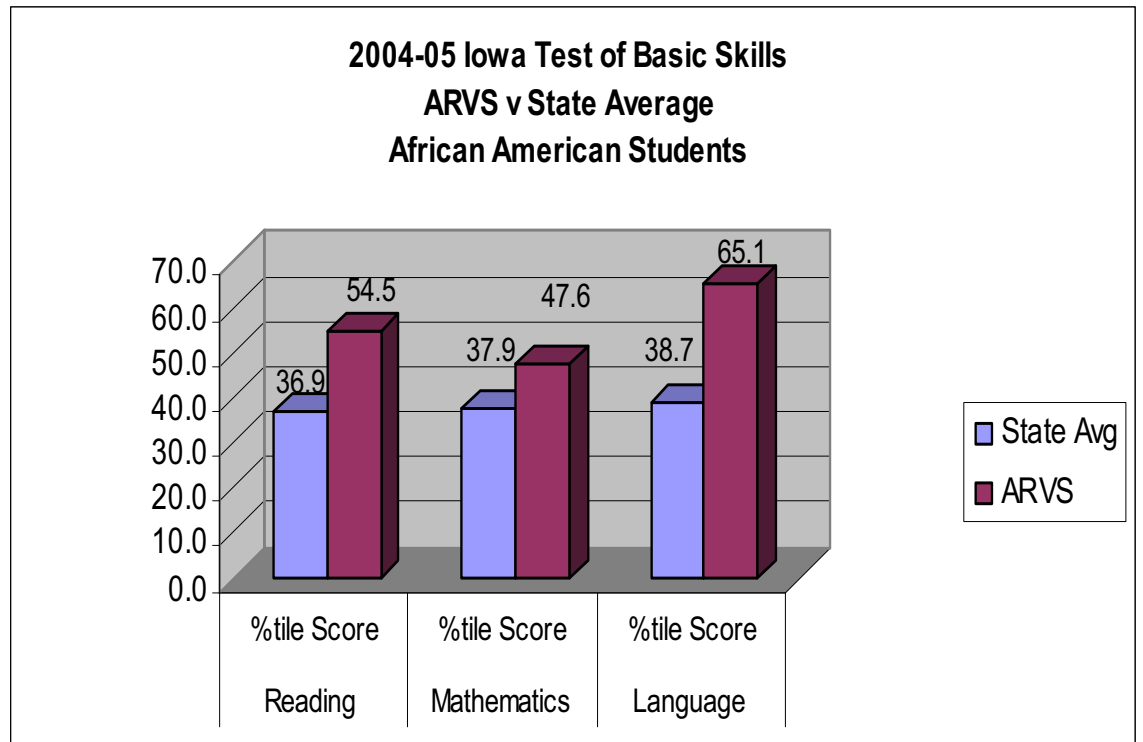- **Success with African-American students: A**rkansas Virtual Academy (ARVA) began as the Arkansas Virtual School (ARVS), a pilot public distance learning school program available to students throughout the state funded by a U.S. Department of Education Voluntary Public School Choice Grant. In accordance with the guidelines of the grant, ARVS granted priority enrollment to students assigned to attend schools designated as being in school improvement as identified by the Arkansas Department of Education in compliance with Arkansas Omnibus Education Act 1467 of 2003 and with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In reading, language arts, and mathematics, ARVS African-American students scored higher than the comparable subset of students in Arkansas across all grade levels in 2004-2005. Two years in a row (2005 and 2006), ARVS students in 3rd through 8th grades scored at or above the state average in all categories on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In 2006, the majority of ARVS students who resided in a school improvement zone, located in the impoverished rural areas in the state, scored in the proficient or advanced range on both math and literacy exams. At the conclusion of the pilot program, ARVA was granted a charter and has been in operation as a charter school since 2007.

ARVS SY 05-06 Reading Performance   ARVS SY 05-06 Math Performance

	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
ARVS	64%	64%	74%	62%	69%	87%
State	57%	61%	56%	59%	53%	66%

	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
ARVS	76%	63%	58%	52%	70%	57%
State	67%	60%	50%	57%	50%	44%

2004-05 Iowa Test of Basic Skills
ARVS v State Average
African American Students
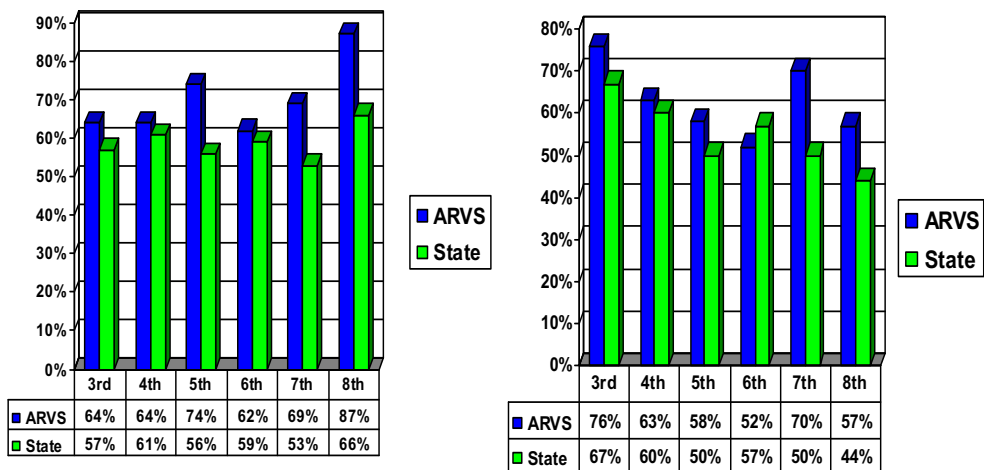
- **Success with Title I readers:** During the last six months of the 2003-2004 school year, the Ohio Virtual Academy (OHVA), using K^{12} Language Arts/English curriculum, conducted a program for its 200 Title I students in grades 2-6 and their parents/mentors to accelerate reading achievement. Meeting twice each month in locations across Ohio, certified OHVA reading teachers modeled research-based reading instruction strategies with students, while their parents/mentors observed the instruction and were coached by the reading teachers to use these strategies at home. Students were pre-and post-tested using the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORT) and Retell Fluency (RTF) assessments. In every grade level, students improved a corresponding amount in reading fluency (average of 17%) and comprehension (average of 18%) between pre- and post-test. This successful program was expanded in 2004-2005 to cover grades 2-8 over the full school year. Comparison of 2005 initial to end-of-year DIBELS ORT and RTF assessments shows even more dramatic achievement gains than in 2004. In 2005 Title I students increased reading fluency an average of 36% and comprehension an average of 69.3%. Third grade Title I students demonstrated related improvement on the Ohio Department of Education 3rd Grade Reading Achievement tests. After taking the tests in October 2004 and March 2005, 78% of third grade students improved their scores from fall to spring. The average improvement was 10.9 points. In 2006 and 2007, Title I reading sessions were delivered in three different components: face-to-face instruction, Distance Learning Instruction Pilot (Odyssey with the web conferencing platform

Parent Satisfaction

Parents express their great satisfaction with the K^{12} curriculum. According to a 2009 survey of parents of K-8 students enrolled in distance learning public schools they serve, 94% of respondents stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the K^{12} curriculum and another 94% of respondents stated that they are very likely or likely to recommend the curriculum to other families.

External Evaluations

Distance learning programs using K^{12} curriculum have also received successful external evaluations, including:

Arkansas Virtual School: In March 2006, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) asked Metis Associates, a national consulting organization, to conduct a study of the overall effectiveness of the Arkansas Virtual School (ARVS) which reported both very positive qualitative and quantitative results. ADE was interested in analyzing the accomplishments and challenges associated with the implementation of ARVS. The study also aimed to assess the viability of expanding the use of the K^{12} curriculum in brick and mortar elementary schools in Arkansas to bolster student achievement. As such, Metis designed and carried out a study that included quantitative analyses of available data and qualitative investigations involving key project stakeholders.

Among the many positive findings of the study were:
- asked why they had chosen ARVS for their children, most parents expressed that it was due to dissatisfaction with traditional public school options or safety (69.4%) and strong interest in the K^{12} curriculum (53.4%) and in alternative methods of schooling (50.3%). Over a third of parents also indicated other reasons for opting to place their children in ARVS, which included the flexibility of scheduling (46.1%).
- teachers described the curriculum as …rigorous, research-based, and comprehensive, as well as engaging and interesting for students; Teachers viewed the K^{12} curriculum as particularly effective in strengthening students' writing skills.
- Other areas of accomplishment that ARVS teachers associated with the K^{12} curriculum were the individual attention…strong academic growth, improved research skills, and strong preparation for state testing.
- Teachers and administrators described how the K^{12} curriculum has been successful in meeting the needs of all students regardless of individual

- learning styles or differences, from special needs students to students with reading difficulties to gifted students.
- The great majority of parents (91.2%) believed that they were provided with adequate training that prepared them to use the K^{12} curriculum
- Teachers were also quite positive about the quality of the training and professional development.
- Taken together, ARVS teachers and administrators were overwhelmingly positive about the effectiveness of the instructional program with participating students and the overall success of the school.
- The majority of parents believe that there was greater learning occurring in ARVS as compared to their child's previous school setting (83.4%).
- Just more than half of all parents also observed changes in their children related to student motivation (53.4%) and engagement and interest in learning (55.4%).
- While there were an insufficient number of cases with criterion-referenced test (known as the Benchmark Exams (CRT)) math scores to conduct analyses for students in the primary grades, there were in the upper elementary and middle school grades. For upper elementary school students, the longer they were enrolled in ARVS, the better their performance in math on the CRT. For middle school students, time enrolled in ARVS was associated with better math performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). (Metis Associates, 2006)

Florida Virtual Academy: In 2003, the Florida legislature created a K–8 online public school pilot program. The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) selected the Florida Virtual Academy (FLVA) to participate in the department's new pilot using the K^{12} curriculum. FLVA currently serves more than 900 K–8 students statewide. For the sixth year in a row, in 2008-2009, the percent of Florida Virtual Academy students scoring proficient or higher has exceeded the state average in most grades and subjects tested, making FLVA the top-scoring K–8 online public school in the state. FLDOE has given FLVA an "A" on the state report card for three consecutive years: 2006–2007, 2007–2008, and 2008-2009. This is the highest score for a Florida public school. FLDOE gives every public school an overall grade based primarily upon student achievement data from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). School grades are calculated based on annual learning gains of each student toward achievement of Florida state standards, the progress of the lowest quartile of students, and the meeting of proficiency standards.

In 2008, the Florida legislature passed a bill that requires all school districts to offer a K–8 distance learning instruction program for the 2009–2010 school year. Based on their success with FLVA, K^{12} is currently one of only two vendors approved by FLDOE to provide distance learning school curriculum to school districts. Currently, more than 30 Florida districts have committed to K^{12} curriculums, management systems and services for 09/10 school year with more to follow.

Texas Electronic Course Pilot (eCP): **Texas Electronic Course Pilot (eCP):** State of Texas Senate Bill 1108 passed by the 78th Legislature (Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 29.909) called for the Commissioner of Education "…to establish a program under which a school district may offer electronic courses to students enrolled in the district or to students enrolled in another district, as provided by an agreement between the districts." Through the Electronic Course Pilot (eCP) program, designed to implement TEC Chapter 29.909, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) examined state policies, requirements, and restrictions impacting school districts that offer electronic courses. The Agency gathered data to develop and support recommendations that enable high-quality online learning and identified appropriate state funding mechanisms for these courses and instructional programs.

The Southwest School was selected as one of five districts and open-enrollment charter schools to participate in the eCP, and was the only selected program to implement a distance learning school through the eCP. Southwest School's online school, the Texas Virtual Academy @ Southwest (TXVA), provided distance learning curriculum delivered outside the traditional classroom in grades three through six to students from the Houston school district. K^{12} provided the curriculum. A total of 242 students were served through the TXVA program during the 2006-2007 school year. Average daily enrollment was 184 students with a range from 151 to 208.

A summative evaluation of the eCP pilot program was conducted at the end of the 2006-2007 school year by Region 4 Education Service Center (Region 4). Due to the overall favorable evaluation of the Southwest School's TXVA eCP pilot, the Texas Education Agency has transitioned the school from "pilot" status to an authorized school program, and authorized the program to expand in the 2007-2008 school year to grades 3-8, and to expand enrollment to 750 students from school districts in the Greater Houston and Greater Dallas/Fort Worth areas. In 2008-2009 the program has expanded to a total of 1500 students and is also serving Greater Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Waco.

- **Explain why the educational philosophy and/or approach is/are likely to result in improved educational performance of students.**

   Please refer to the answer to the previous question ("*Provide documentation, research, and/or a rationale that supports the educational philosophy and curricular approach*") for evidence that this educational philosophy and curricular approach does improve the educational performance of students.

- **Describe how the educational philosophy and/or approach align with the school's mission and student needs.**

The mission of the Sandia Academy is:

   …to use technology to provide an innovative public charter school education option meeting the individual needs of kindergarten through twelfth grade students. The Academy will be a hybrid model: traditional face-to-face

classroom instruction combined with distance learning. It will be a powerful model of meaningful parent, student and teacher involvement. Sandia Academy will develop and enrich all of its students by fostering their desire to be lifelong learners to reach their full potential in life.

The needs for the school, as spelled out in **Section IV** of the application, in summary, are centered around improving the educational performance of students—equalizing access to educational opportunities; providing highly qualified distance learning teachers; making AYP; improving graduation rates; preparing students for college; and preparing students for the workforce.

The educational philosophy and approach of the school align with both the mission and needs. They are focused on providing technology and a "tried and true" curriculum exemplifying "best practices" in a blended distance learning education model to individualize instruction—teaching and learning. The philosophy and approach are premised on the beliefs that all students deserve access to this type of education and that it is critical to their success and the future of New Mexico.

2. Description of the Curriculum

If the curriculum has already been selected/developed: Provide a detailed <u>description</u> of the curriculum that includes a scope and sequence.

Sandia Academy has chosen K$^{12®}$ curriculum developed by K12 Inc. (K^{12}). K^{12} is a technology-based education company that provides curriculum and educational services for online delivery to students in grades K–12. K^{12}'s mission is to maximize a child's potential by providing access to an engaging and effective education, regardless of geographic location or socio-economic background. Since their inception in 2000, they have developed curriculum and online learning platforms that promote mastery of core concepts and skills for students of all ability levels. Their approach combines cognitive science with individualized learning.

Content of the K^{12} program is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence, a highly specific, rigorous sequence of knowledge and skills to guide schools in planning and developing a coherent curriculum. This sequence is currently being used successfully by hundreds of schools nationwide. In a recent report about charter schools in New Mexico commissioned by the New Mexico Public Education Department*,* the authors observed that one of the goals of the New Mexico charter law is to provide a venue for school innovation and reform (The Synergy Group, Ltd., 2005). They further concluded from their study, that, five years after the Charter Law was enacted, "the curriculum of the charter schools, in general, may be characterized by three unique qualities: *cohesiveness, integration,* and *innovation* (The Synergy Group, Ltd., 2005)." That conclusion came after observing that "A number of schools adopted the Core Knowledge curriculum…" and that "In time, Core Knowledge became a foundational element of the curriculum" of several schools (The Synergy Group, Ltd., 2005)." With its basis in the Core Knowledge Sequence, K^{12} curriculum has a proven track record in a variety of settings, including hybrid distance learning and brick and mortar programs, full-time online, part-time or

single courses online, and traditional brick and mortar classroom instructional programs—making their curriculum well suited and highly desirable for the Academy.

K^{12} Inc. is accredited by the Commission on International and Trans-Region-Accreditation (CITA) in recognition of the quality of its offerings. Distance learning schools using K^{12} curriculum have received accreditation from qualified accrediting organizations across the country including CITA, Middle States Association, North Central Association, Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

K^{12} has developed the nation's leading web-based academic program combining online technology with traditional instruction and materials. In the Academy's hybrid distance learning program, students in grades K through 12, will receive the K^{12} course content, instruction, assignments and supplemental materials (1) in sessions in the Learning Center; (2) online (web-based lessons); and (3) through hands-on materials kits, including related books (textbooks, workbooks, reference books, and anthologies), DVDs, maps, and other hands-on activity materials (science experiments, art supplies, math manipulatives, etc.). Instruction in both the distance learning setting and the Learning Center will be provided by New Mexico licensed teachers who work in conjunction with mentors (usually parents or guardians, but can be any caring adult that the parent or guardian selects) to ensure student success. Each family of Academy K-8 students will be able to check out a computer and printer for the duration of their students' enrollment in the school. Additional computers may also be checked out as needed to accommodate multiple students in the same family. Each Academy high school student in grades 9 through 12 will be to check out a computer and printer.

The Academy will develop policies to address connectivity matters. In those instances that disadvantaged families cannot afford Internet access, the Academy will provide reasonable scholarships to those that have a demonstrated need.[1] The Academy will also seek grants to cover the costs of the Internet scholarships. Students may also access the Academy's web-based curriculum via local publicly available Internet such as in public libraries.

The K^{12} comprehensive curriculum meets and exceeds state standards including the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards. K^{12} has developed courses that incorporate standards, parameters, and characteristics outlined by a host of leading sources including: the National Academy of Science; American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; Chinese Language Teachers' Association; National Art Education Association; International Association for K–12 Online Learning; National Association for Sport and Physical Education; National Council on Economic Education; National Council for History Education; National Council of Teachers of English; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; and Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The quality of the K^{12}

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[1] **The anti-donation clause is not implicated because the resulting benefit to students consists of a recognized governmental service, i.e., education. 02Op.Att'yGen.(1997)**

courses and learning management system along with a track record of academic success has been documented.

Courses developed by K[12] now serve over 55,000 full-time students in 23 states and 30 countries. Because most online providers serve individual courses and sometimes part-time enrollments, the industry standard for measuring student enrollments is the number of semester courses completed in a given year. By this measure, K[12] provided over 600,000 semester courses this year alone—by far the nation's leader.

K[12] has developed over 15,000 lessons of engaging curriculum, which includes online lessons, video, assessment, learning games, labs, physical experiences and published textbooks and workbooks.

Improving Instruction and Achievement

Student, parents, teachers, administrators and the Governance Board may continuously measure and receive reports on student achievement gains during the school year using K[12]'s proprietary systems. Using these proprietary systems, the Academy may deliver the curriculum to its students and permit teachers and parents to see, at every moment, how the student is progressing. These systems provide each student with an individualized learning experience. The Academy will be using the following K[12] management tools:

Learning Management System (LMS)

The LMS is an intuitive, web-based software platform that provides access to more than 15,000 online lessons; lesson/unit/term assessments; hands-on activities; alternative learning approaches; and optional and supplemental lessons and activities, as well as lesson planning and scheduling tools and progress tracking tools, both of which serve a key role in assisting parents and teachers in managing each student's progress. The LMS is a community structure in which students, parents, and teachers interact as well as a web-based platform students, parents and teachers can access with an Internet connection at any time.

Lesson Planning and Scheduling Tools

The K[12] lesson planning and scheduling tools enable teachers and parents to establish a master plan for completing lessons. These tools are designed to update the plan as a student progresses through each lesson and course, allowing flexibility to increase or decrease the pace the student moves through the curriculum while ensuring that the student progresses towards completion in the desired time frame. Changes can be made to the schedule at any point and the remainder of the student's schedule will automatically adjust.

Progress Tracking Tools

Once a master schedule has been established, the LMS delivers lessons based upon the schedule. Each day, a student is initially directed to a screen listing the syllabus for that day and selects one of the listed lessons. As each lesson is completed, the student returns to the day's syllabus to proceed to the next subject. If a student does not complete a lesson during the session, the lesson will be rescheduled to the next day resuming at the point where the student left off. The progress tracking tool allows students, parents and teachers to monitor student progress. In addition, information collected by the progress tracking tool regarding student performance, attendance and other data is transferred to the management system for use in providing administrative support services.

Student Administration Management System (SAMS)

SAMS, the master digital database captures raw student data, stores it, organizes it, and feeds it to other systems. SAMS collects and provides all of the information required to manage student enrollment and monitor student performance. Teachers, Head Administrators, and other staff will have a secure, internal communications tool, an overview of their students' current progress and history, and the status of curriculum materials. It allows teachers to interact one-on-one with students. Parents and students will use SAMS as a secure communications tool to track students' course progress, grades, and attendance history, and to check the status of course material shipments.

The Academy will be using K^{12} learning system because if its **Guiding Principles of Design, Development and Delivery** which are based on the following set of guiding principles:

- *Apply "Tried and True" Educational Approaches for Instruction.* "True" methodologies are based on cognitive research regarding the way in which individuals learn. K^{12} supplements their learning system with teaching tools and methodologies that have been tested, or "tried," and proven to be effective. They have developed a unique National Instructional Model representing best practices in the delivery of instruction. Highly qualified licensed teachers are an essential and vital piece of the model.
- *Employ Technology in an Effective and Appropriate Way for Learning.* K^{12} employs technology only where they feel it is appropriate and can enhance the learning process. In addition to online content, K^{12} curriculum includes a rich mix of offline course materials, including engaging textbooks and hands-on materials such as phonics kits and musical instruments.
- *Base Learning Objectives on Rich Content and "Big Ideas."* K^{12} refers to "big ideas" as the key, subconscious frameworks that serve as the foundation to a student's future understanding of a subject matter. They use these "big ideas" to organize and provide the master objectives of every course that is developed. They then utilize rich, engaging content to best communicate these concepts to students to promote mastery of the topics.
- *Assess Every Objective to Ensure Mastery.* To facilitate effective assessment, K^{12} curriculum establishes clear objectives for each lesson. Throughout a course, each

student's progress is assessed and evaluated by a teacher at a point when each objective is expected to be mastered, providing direction for appropriate pacing, reinforcing learning, and promoting mastery of a topic before a student moves to the next lesson or course.

- ***Facilitate Flexibility as the Level, Pace and Hours Spent on Each Objective Vary by Child.*** Generally, adequate progress for most students is to complete one academic year's curriculum within a nine-month school year. Each individual student may take greater or fewer instructional hours and more or less effort than the average student to achieve this progress. The K^{12} learning system is designed to facilitate this flexibility.

- ***Prioritize Important, Complex Objectives in a Logical Scope and Sequence.*** Greater instructional effort is focused on the most important and difficult concepts and skills. K^{12} uses existing research, feedback from parents and students and experienced teacher judgments to determine these priorities, and to modify their learning system to guide the allocation of each student's time and effort.

K^{12} employs a wide range of experts in order to create products that implement these principles. This involves a blend of the best production process methods with key insights from cognitive science, the best education practices, and amazing work from talented illustrators, animators, editors, photo researchers, and writers.

The Academy has also chosen the **K^{12} curriculum** because of its alliance with the **Partnership for 21st Century Skills.**

The initiatives promoted by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills have been addressed by K^{12}'s development teams and embodied in its courses since the Partnership's inception in 2002. The Partnership has specified six main areas of concern:

Core Subjects: English, reading, and language arts; mathematics; science; civics, government, economics, history, and geography; arts; world languages. K^{12} has developed a full offering of courses in the core areas. All K^{12} courses are aligned to national standards at the moment of course design. This is a best practice in course development.

K^{12} courses are research-based with studies to back it up. And K^{12} courses are offered on multiple levels—including Honors and AP®—to address the academic and career goals of each student.

21st Century Themes: global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy. K^{12} courses include these themes, recognizing—by the very nature of their online environment—that global awareness is a necessity for students today. With that awareness comes the knowledge that, to compete effectively, students need to be well-versed in the topics of business, finance, economics, and entrepreneurship. These themes are embodied both in courses that explicitly cover business and entrepreneurship issues, and in lessons in all subject areas that make connections with the themes of global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health literacy.

Learning and Innovation Skills: critical thinking and problem solving; creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration. Critical thinking, problem solving, and intellectual curiosity are the age-old foundations of education, which are satisfied most obviously through compliance with the standards. Innovation and creativity are invaluable learning tools that are all too often overlooked. K^{12} encourages and nurtures these skills. Other skills are addressed, not through course content, but through student interaction with their teachers and their peers.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Literacy. In addition to a full selection of courses in technology, from basic computer literacy to Web design, C++ programming, and Flash animation, students using K^{12} curriculum are ICT-literate simply by virtue of being online students. They will enter the work world already skilled with the tools used today for research, writing, data analysis, presentation, communication, and feedback, and at ease collaborating with colleagues on the other side of the office or the other side of the world.

Life and Career Skills: leadership; ethics; flexibility and adaptability; productivity and accountability; initiative and self-direction; social and cross-cultural skills; personal and social responsibility. As with other 21st century skills, life and career skills will be cultivated at the Academy using K^{12} course content and by the actual act of participating in both online and real-world communities.

Assessments that measure all of these. The Academy will be able to use K^{12} assessments to measure student achievement in various ways—through electronic multiple-choice and true-and-false quizzes that measure the retention of facts, through written responses that require critical thinking, through hands-on laboratories that mimic real-world application, and through real-time interactions with teachers that reflect all of these. Students show accumulated knowledge and skill both through testing and project- or portfolio-based work. Students using K^{12} curriculum learn to express themselves to their teachers and their peers through written and spoken word as well as through visual media, one-on-one and in small groups.

K-8 Curriculum

From kindergarten through 8th grade, K^{12} courses are categorized into six core courses: Language Arts/English, Mathematics, Science, History, Art, and Music. In addition, K^{12} provides multiple levels of World Languages in Spanish, French, Latin, German, and Chinese. Their proprietary curriculum includes all of the courses that students need to complete their core kindergarten through 8th grade education. These courses focus on developing fundamental skills and teaching the key knowledge building blocks or schemas that each student will need to master the major subject areas, meet state standards and complete more advanced coursework. The K^{12} learning system offers the flexibility for each student to take courses at different grade levels in a single academic year, providing flexibility for students to progress at their own level and pace within each subject area. The curriculum is mastery-based with assessments built into every lesson to guide and tailor the pace of progress to each child's needs.

MATH

Building upon the success of a long-established program, K[12] Math balances mastery of fundamental skills with critical thinking and problem-solving. K[12] Math emphasizes an active, multi-sensory approach to ensure that students understand the concrete realities that underlie mathematical concepts. Regular practice and review ensures mastery of basic skills. Online games and animations motivate students and help illustrate concepts, while challenge problems help develop critical thinking skills. From helping younger students make the link between the concrete and the abstract to introducing older students to Algebra, K[12] Math provides a thorough mathematic grounding.

SCIENCE

K[12] is unique in offering real science for young students. The program balances hands-on experience with systematic study of scientific terms and concepts. Students perform many experiments to help them understand scientific principles, and receive guided instruction in important scientific concepts. Exploring life, earth, and physical sciences in each grade, K[12] Science nurtures curiosity, analytical skills, and an appreciation of how the world is shaped by ongoing scientific and technological advances. Students learn about the human body, plants and animals, rocks and minerals, stars, matter, motion, electricity, magnetism, and much more. Through hands-on experiments, the program helps students develop skills of observation and analysis, and learn how scientists understand our world.

LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH

K[12] Language Arts/English helps students develop important reading and writing skills, while also inspiring a love of literature. Combining Phonics, Literature, Language Skills, and Spelling lessons, the Language Arts/English program emphasizes classic works, teaches writing as a process, and prepares students for standardized tests in the areas of language skills and reading comprehension. Younger children learn the basics of phonics and grammar and prepare for reading through systematic, multi-sensory activities, while older students develop literary analysis and comprehension skills by reading novels and nonfiction works.

HISTORY

With integrated topics in Geography and Civics, K[12] History opens young minds and imaginations to far-off lands, distant times, and diverse cultures. K[12] emphasizes the story in History—a story that includes not only great men and women but also everyday people. The kindergarten History program takes students on a world tour of the seven continents, and provides an overview of American History through a series of biographies of famous Americans. The History program in grades 1–4 tells the story of civilization from the Stone Age to the Space Age, while students in grades 5

and up explore major themes and topics in greater depth through survey courses in American and World History.

ART

Following the timelines in the History lessons, K[12] Art lessons introduce students to great works of art from different cultures and eras, while engaging them in creative activity—painting, drawing, sculpting, and weaving using materials such as oil pastels, crayons, molding clay, plaster, and yarn etc. Students are introduced to the elements of art—line, shape, color—and identify different types of artworks such as portrait, landscape, and still life as they learn about important paintings, sculpture, and architecture. They study the works of famous artists, from Rembrandt to Warhol, and learn about different artistic movements such as Impressionism and Cubism. Students also create their own works of art similar to those they have learned about, such as mobiles, collages, and stained glass.

MUSIC

K[12] Music teaches basic music concepts at different, age-appropriate levels, so that all music students have a consistent understanding of the essential concepts governing Western music. The curriculum builds quickly, in a structured, sensible way. The concepts in the lessons are critical to fostering music comprehension, which is taught in stages as students move through their years in K[12]. Much more than simple music appreciation, this is an approach that will help students train their own ears, voices, and bodies in the fundamental building blocks of music.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The only online language-learning program designed specifically for kids, K[12] World Language courses help students read, write, speak, and listen for meaning in five languages (Spanish, French, German, Latin, and Chinese). Combining a variety of games, simple narratives, and regular writing and speaking challenges, the World Language program highlights common vocabulary terms and phrases, introducing younger students to a wide range of grammar patterns, while helping older students master numerous grammar principles. Courses prepare students to generate language incorporating the vocabulary and patterns they have learned. In addition, culture lessons challenge younger students to recognize different cultural manifestations, while older students analyze and compare practices and perspectives of various cultures.

Each week consists of an ongoing adventure story; new vocabulary or grammar patterns; numerous interactive games reinforcing the week's content;, reading and listening comprehension activities; speaking and writing activities; multimedia cultural presentations from areas across the globe; and assessments so that students can measure their progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and regular speaking and writing submissions. Courses thoroughly meet all national standards as set forth

by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and follows state guidelines in covering level-appropriate standards in communication, cultures, linguistic and cultural comparisons, cross-curricular connections, and engaging with target-language speaking communities.

Please refer to the K-8 Course Catalog in **Appendix 7**; the World Languages Catalog in **Appendix 9**; and the K-8 Scope and Sequence in **Appendix 12.**

K^{12} 9-12 program: $K^{12}9^{12}$

In the Learning Center, the Academy will use the K^{12} curriculum asynchronously and synchronously – in sessions described in a previous section—lab science; language arts/reading/composition, math, and science test prep for the New Mexico high School Competency Examination; online Find Your Path counseling program; service learning; transition topics; study skills; final exam prep; and SAT/ACT test prep. Students will be able to work on their lessons according to their own daily schedule and pace. There are no bell schedules. If a lesson takes a student 25 minutes or 2 hours it doesn't matter. Students can take extra time on a lesson as needed. The web conferencing tool, *Elluminate,* will also be used to allow students to socialize and make friends through activities like Chess Club, guest speakers, and peer mentoring.

The Academy will be able to offer more than 105 K^{12} high school courses designed to help students earn their high school diploma and find their own path to post-high school success—whether that's in college or in the workforce. K^{12} offers Math, English, Science, and History courses in multiple levels—Core, Comprehensive, Honors, and Advanced Placement—to meet the needs of diverse learners. Students can also take up to four years of a world language (depending on the language), and choose from a variety of electives, including anthropology, Web design, and digital photography. Unlike other programs, where a student must be in a particular "academic path", the K^{12} program allows students to chart their own course, choosing from among the four levels of courses to match their aptitude and goals. So, if a student excels in Math and Science, they may take all Honors/AP courses in those subjects, while choosing from among the Core and Comprehensive English and History courses. These multiple course levels prevent you from being "locked in" to one level of a particular subject, and account for natural progress and growth.

The Academy will use a combination of rich, engaging content with interesting, interactive demonstrations and activities helps students absorb and retain information. The use of graded assignments and assessments further allows students to demonstrate progress toward learning objectives.

Four Levels of Core Subjects

By using the K^{12} high school curriculum, the Academy will allow students to harness the power of individualized learning by choosing from the following four levels of Math, English, Science, and History courses:

- The **K^{12} Core courses** are similar to the standard courses offered by many other programs. They meet all academic requirements for each course area, both for graduation and for potential admission into a wide range of colleges. In K^{12} Core courses, topics are broken into discrete modules that are taught in tandem with the framework students need to develop strong study skills. Rich, engaging content with interesting, interactive demonstrations and activities help students in the Core courses to absorb and retain the information presented. Optional content and activities are also available to students wishing to study a particular topic in more depth.

- **K^{12} Comprehensive courses** are designed for students with a strong foundational knowledge and aptitude in the subject area being covered, as well as solid study skills. As a result, students in the Comprehensive courses do more extensive writing and research projects, and tackle problems that require more analytical thinking. Course projects and activities also demand more independent thinking and self-discipline than projects in Core courses. As with Core courses, additional content and activities are provided to students wishing to delve more deeply into a topic.

- **K^{12} Honors courses** hold students to a greater degree of accountability, and demand even greater independence and self-discipline than their Comprehensive counterparts. Students synthesize and evaluate information and concepts from multiple sources and read texts typically assigned in college-level courses. Students also demonstrate college level writing in essays that require analysis of primary and secondary sources, responsible use of evidence, and comprehensive citation of sources. Successful completion of prerequisites, teacher/school counselor recommendation, and a strong interest in the subject are recommended for enrollment in a K^{12} Honors course.

- **K^{12} Advanced Placement courses** are college level courses that follow curriculum specified by the College Board. Like K^{12} Honors courses, AP courses require a greater degree of self-discipline for in-depth study of the subject. These courses are designed to prepare students for success on AP exams, providing students the opportunity to earn credit at most of the nation's colleges and universities. Successful completion of prerequisites, teacher/school counselor recommendation, and a strong interest in the subject are recommended for enrollment in an AP® course.

Please refer to the K^{12} High School Catalog in **Appendix 8**; the World Languages Catalog in **Appendix 9**; and the K^{12} High School Courses' Scope and Sequence in **Appendix 13.**

- **If the curriculum has yet to be developed: Provide a <u>description</u> of the proposed curriculum and a specific plan for its development that will include**

a scope and sequence. The development plan should include a description of the process, a timeline, and resources (including staffing) to be utilized.

This question is not applicable since the curriculum has been selected and developed. Please refer to the immediately preceding question/answer.

3. **Alignment with NM Standards**

- **The curriculum selected/developed must align to the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards. Provide a copy of the alignment document if it was completed, OR, if the alignment has not been completed, describe the process and a specific timeline to be used for aligning the curriculum with the New Mexico Standards.**

The following alignments of K^{12} curriculum to the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards have been completed and are included as **Appendix 11** of this application:

- Grades K-8 Language Arts/English, Mathematics, and Science
- Grades 9-11 Language Arts/English (Literary Analysis and Composition I, Literary Analysis and Composition II, American Literature)
- Grades 9-12 Mathematics (Algebra I, Algebra II (Scope and Sequence), Geometry, and Precalculus/Trigonometry)
- Grades 9-12 Science (Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics (Scope and Sequence)

The K^{12} expectations for these curricula are aligned to the New Mexico standards for the corresponding subject areas; all address the same basic content and skills. In the instances in which content and skills specified for mastery in one grade in the New Mexico standards are specified for mastery at a different grade in the K^{12} program, teachers will supplement K^{12} lessons to include coverage of state-specific standards at the appropriate grade levels.

Alignments of the K^{12} History, World Languages and Grade 12 Language Arts/English curricula are underway and will be completed during the Academy's planning year. The alignments are conducted by content area specialists in each curriculum area.

All of the alignments will be thoroughly reviewed during the planning year to prepare teachers for student instruction. To further ensure alignment between the Academy curriculum, the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards, and the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA), during the planning year test blueprint alignments will be developed for math, reading, writing, science, and social studies (grades 3-8 and 11) and reading, language arts, math, science, social studies and written composition for the New Mexico High School Competency Examination.

4. **Strategies and Methods:**

- **Provide a description of the strategies and methods to be used in delivering the curriculum.**

The Academy believes that academic success leads to career success. But we also recognize that there is more than one way of learning—that not all students learn in the same way. Given the right mix of tools and approaches, mastery should be for everyone.

The Academy has chosen the K^{12} curriculum because it is provided in a way that allows students to adjust to the pace, schedule, and learning style that works best for them— which could vary day by day and subject by subject. There are very clear lesson objectives and the assessments are designed to help teachers and mentors gauge when each student has mastered each objective. There are also a variety of activities; the type and amount of activity needed to master each lesson objective will vary by subject and student.

The curriculum also matches the right learning tool to the task. Rich digital media and animations are used when a lesson is best taught using interactivity. Beautiful illustrations and words make stories and ideas jump off the page when print works best. Things like paint, rocks, dirt and other messy stuff are used when the best approach is to get hands dirty. These approaches help engage young minds in the right ways. Interactivity of the learning process is enhanced by the use of the tools described which makes the program adaptable to all types of students and learners.

K-8

The Academy educational program will be individualized to each student's needs and abilities. To accommodate the diverse learning styles of children, we will employ a variety of teaching strategies, including direct instruction, hands-on exploration, use of manipulatives, practice exercises, and "distributed review" (a method of including previous lesson material in a current lesson for the purpose of reinforcing and reviewing the content).

The needs of the student and adherence to state standards were at the forefront of the curriculum design. The K^{12} On-Line School (OLS) includes detailed instructional guides, clear presentation of lessons, a comprehensive on-line help system, technical support, optional challenge problems, teaching tips, and additional resources.

Students will proceed at their own pace. The K^{12} curriculum and the Online School (OLS)(K^{12}'s learning management system) offer the flexibility for each student to take courses at different grade levels in a single academic year, allowing students to progress at their own level and pace within each subject area. Students who are excelling can progress ahead to the next lessons and units. Students who are struggling can take more

time and receive extra help from teachers and, in some cases, alternative lessons provided through the OLS.

In grades K-8 distance learning setting, written assignments are submitted daily to the student's mentor. Periodic assignments are sent to the teacher infrequently via document scanning, fax or email.

$K^{12}9^{12}$

Students can choose from many courses that consist of multiple units, lessons and activities that instruct, provide practice to, and evaluate students. Within these courses, students complete assignments, lessons, and assessments that teachers post to their course calendar. Students submit assignments to teachers on or before the due dates posted on the calendar. Once teachers grade and return assignments to students, they read the feedback listed from their teachers. Teachers are available during live office hours or in online discussions. Students can also get help during optional live sessions or by watching recordings of these sessions. Students always know where they are in a course and how they are doing, and can continually monitor their progress. Most of all students partner with teachers and other staff – being actively engaged and committed as a learner and student of the Sandia Academy high school program.

The Academy's K^{12} high school curriculum will offer a seamless and integrated option for students and their parents, where all of the major tools for success are available right there in the *learning management system*.

- Single login at the website – no need to remember several usernames and passwords.
- Home page announcements & school info to keep both students and parents abreast of important information.
- A single calendar that keeps track of all of a student's lessons and assignments makes time management a breeze.
- Online Groups and organizations help students to make friends and to explore their interests.
- Students will also have access to *Elluminate* – a great web conferencing tool that allows for live real-time synchronous sessions with teachers and other students.
- Accurate online grade book tools allow students and parents to check on course progress anytime – day or night.
- Student Guides for K^{12}-created courses guide students step-by-step through lessons and help teach effective note-taking and study skills. Worksheets provide extra skill-building practice for students.
- Mentor Guides for K^{12}-created courses provide "in-roads" into student learning for mentors.
- At a glance, parents can know exactly what a student should be learning in their current unit and lesson.
- Many courses make use of offline materials – many created by K^{12} – that enhance learning and make offline studying easier.
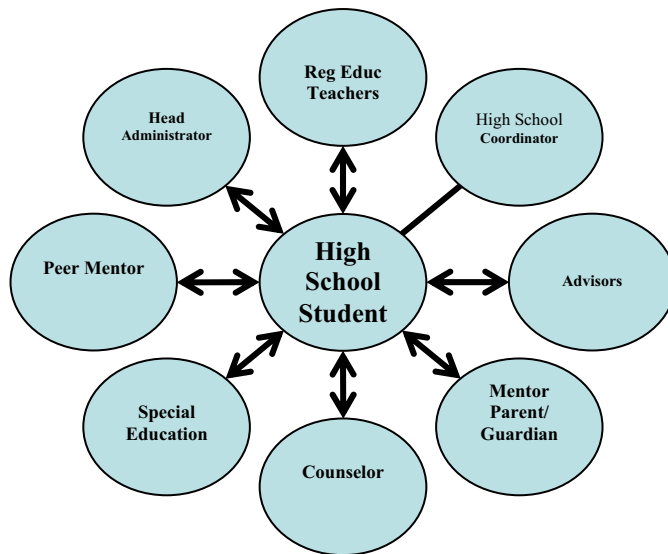
- Threaded discussions are used in many courses to help students learn from each other and to form a community of learners in a class.
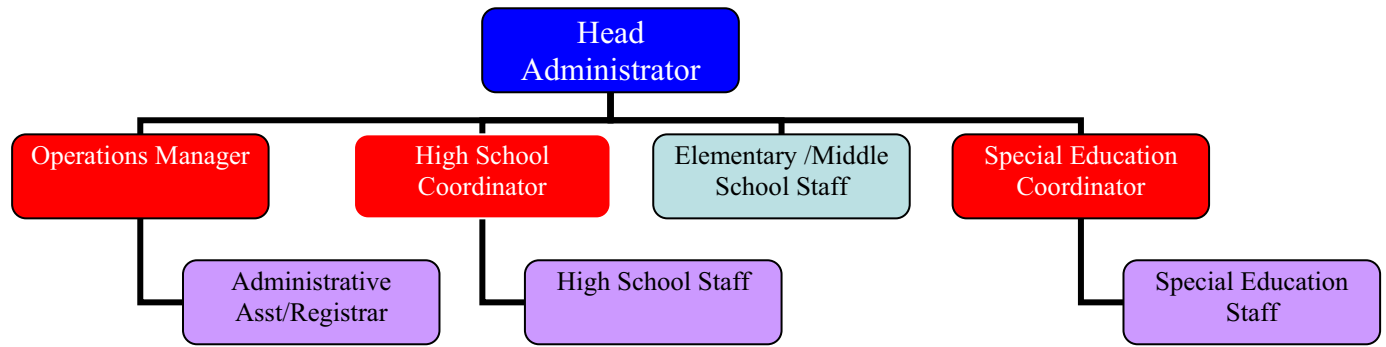
Courses use visualizations to make abstract concepts and complex ideas more accessible for students. K^{12} employs a variety of techniques to explain these concepts in a *media-rich* environment through:

- Animations – unzip strands of DNA, and reconstruct them to understand how proteins work together.
- Illustrations – view the systems of the human body layer by layer and see how they build upon each other.
- Simulations – Understand how density and mass have an effect on the buoyancy of an object.
- Games – test a student's knowledge of the cold war in a timed trivia game.
- Photography – See the Taj Majal up close and personal.
- Video – Famous speeches that happened before students were born.

These interactive pieces engage the students in ways that print or traditional classroom materials can't.

While the Head Administrator will make final determinations about the staffing of the school depending on student enrollment, it is anticipated that the Academy's high school program support personnel will be similar to the following model and high school students will benefit from such a qualified staff.

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                        │     Head        │
                        │  Administrator  │
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│   Operations   │  │  High School   │  │Elementary/Middle│  │Special Education│
│    Manager     │  │  Coordinator   │  │  School Staff   │  │  Coordinator   │
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│ Administrative │  │ High School    │                      │Special Education│
│ Asst/Registrar │  │    Staff       │                      │    Staff       │
└────────────────┘  └────────────────┘                      └────────────────┘
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Students will be served – in every course – by subject-specific, New Mexico licensed teachers who are highly qualified in the subjects they teach and in the most effective online instructional techniques. This means that students taking at least 6 courses will most likely have at least 6 different teachers – one for each subject. It will be the teacher's personal responsibility to ensure the academic success of each individual student in their class. In the grades 9-12 distance learning setting, assignments will be submitted to the teacher about once per week and will be sent to the teacher electronically via a course Drop Box Tool. Teachers will engage students in the coursework and continually motivate them, monitor student progress in the course, as well as grading and providing instructional feedback on assignments. Students will learn from this feedback and then revise their efforts for future assignments. They will set the pace of the course through defining daily assignments and setting due dates, and support students through the use of asynchronous and synchronous methods.

Mentors are usually parents or guardians, but can be any caring adult that the parent or guardian assigns to serve as the 'eyes and ears' and who work in **conjunction with the teacher** to ensure student success. They are responsible for confirming:

- Materials and equipment are received
- Computer equipment is working and reliable
- There is constant connectivity to the Internet
- Students are completing their daily assignments
- Students are submitting all required assignments to teachers on or before the due date
- Encourage and motivate students daily
- Check for student understanding of their coursework

- **Provide an explanation of how the curriculum will address students' needs and assist students in reaching the NM Standards.** *(NOTE: Students with special needs, including students who require bilingual education, special education or are limited English proficient, should be addressed in Subsection D: Special Populations)*

The curriculum is mastery-based with a variety of formative and summative content-specific assessments built into every lesson to guide and tailor the pace of progress to each child's needs.

- **Lesson Assessments** are used to verify mastery of the objectives for that lesson, and to determine whether a review of some or the entire lesson is advisable. When content is presented using platforms that support adaptivity, lesson assessments can also determine the learner path.
- **Unit Assessments** show whether the student has retained key learning objectives for the unit, and identify specific objectives students may need to review before moving on.
- **Semester Assessments** verify student mastery of key learning objectives for the semester.

Teachers will monitor individual student progress by setting goals, grading assignments, giving support and advice, and drawing on their years of experience and training. This approach, integrated assessments, and comprehensive learning system will provide parents and teachers with the support needed to deliver an unparalleled education. Teachers can proactively track individual student academic progress through ongoing lesson and unit assessments tracked in "real time" through the OLS. Students who master lessons ahead of schedule can progress seamlessly into the next unit (or even grade level). Students who need additional instructional time can continue working on lessons until they master the lesson objectives. Our specialty is individualized and mastery-based learning. The K^{12} curriculum is based on cognitive science, decades of research about learning, and tried-and-true methodologies.

As stated in **Section V (A)(3)** of this application, the K^{12} expectations for their curricula are aligned to the New Mexico standards for the corresponding subject areas; all address the same basic content and skills. In the instances in which content and skills specified for mastery in one grade in the New Mexico standards are specified for mastery at a different grade in the K^{12} program, teachers will supplement K^{12} lessons to include coverage of state-specific standards at the appropriate grade levels. To further ensure alignment between the Academy curriculum, the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA), and the New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE) during the planning year test blueprint alignments will be developed.

Academy students will fully participate in the New Mexico Statewide Assessment Program (NMSAP) tests as applicable at the appropriate age levels which will measure to what extent students are meeting those standards. Throughout the school year, the Sandia

Academy will be proactive to ensure that its students reach the New Mexico standards. As explained in detail in **Section V (D),** the Academy will measure student achievement gains and report them to students, parents, teachers, administrators and the Board during the school year.

- Each grade 3-8 and grade 10 student must take the Scantron Performance Assessment in Mathematics and Reading in the fall to determine a benchmark for measuring growth and to enable the teacher to develop an individualized learning plan for each student.
- Students who do not have a score that is high enough to predict success on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA) will receive focused remediation.
- The Scantron Achievement Series will also be administered to each student on a set schedule in order to measure attainment of New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards throughout the course of the school year.
- All standards will be assessed and remediated as necessary prior to the administration of New Mexico Statewide Assessment Program (NMSAP) tests in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. Remediation will be provided by direct instruction from teachers using a variety of remedial resources which are specific to the student's demonstrated weakness on a discrete New Mexico standard.
- All students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 will take the Scantron Performance Assessment again in the spring to measure the "effect" of the educational program on students.
- All results of diagnostic assessments, including Scantron Performance and Achievement series, will be reported to students and parents through-out the school year.
- Data from Scantron diagnostic testing will be reviewed in the school at the grade, subject (math and reading), classroom, and student level by administrators and teachers no less than quarterly in order to review the success of intervention strategies with struggling students.
- The school will develop a Student Achievement Improvement Plan based on data from all available sources which will be reviewed no less than quarterly throughout the course of the school year in order to ensure grade level progress toward New Mexico standards.
- High school students' transcripts are reviewed to determine if necessary prerequisite courses have been successfully completed.

- **Provide <u>a</u> descriptive example of the curricular strategies and methods in action in the classroom.**

Highly qualified licensed teachers are an essential and vital piece of the Academy's educational model—creating a community of learners. Their classrooms will be both synchronous and asynchronous. The teacher will be responsible for validating student attendance and course activity, curricular mastery, and assigning course grades. The teacher

will also be the first point of contact for students and parents with all issues regarding the curriculum. Resources provided by teachers will include instructional and curricular support, differentiating instruction and/or assessment as necessary, organizational assistance, and 'good old-fashioned' encouragement. Each K-8 student will be instructed by a team including state licensed teachers and parents or other designated responsible adults who are the students' "mentors." A healthy working relationship between the student and the assigned teacher and between the mentor and the teacher will be essential. One licensed teacher will be assigned to each K-8 student and will communicate with the parent through e-mail, telephone, online web meetings, and physical meetings. A suggested lesson plan will be provided to the parent each week and will update automatically as the student progresses.

Teachers will provide both synchronous and asynchronous instruction and support to students and their mentors—at the Learning Center and by phone, email, and web conferencing. The teacher will lead academic conferences with the mentor, but will also be available to answer questions the student and/or mentor have as they progress through the lessons. The teacher may also provide, depending on the student's need, direct instruction through Elluminate, a web-based conferencing platform. Students will attend classroom sessions by logging in on Elluminate Live!, using chat, an interactive whiteboard, Voice-Over IP (VOIP), and other features to further explore and discuss lesson topics synchronously with teachers and fellow students. Teachers will also plan and supervise periodic student events including field trips and opportunities to socialize with fellow students.

In the high school program, students will have one subject-specific teacher for each subject studied, and these teachers will be responsible for reviewing all student work and providing instructional feedback. The teachers will work together on a teaching team, and employ a cooperative team-teaching approach. This approach will allow the parent to focus on serving as a mentor and guide to her/his student to help them achieve academic excellence. Depending on the final staffing of the school which will be based on student needs, others on the team could include advisors, school counselors, special education teachers, and administrative staff.

- **Provide a description of professional development that may be necessary for implementation of the strategies and methods to be used in delivering the curriculum.**

The training and support offered to teachers in the Sandia Academy, including special education teachers, will be designed to equip teachers to meet iNACOL's "National Standards for Quality Online Teaching" and include two major components – intake training/new teacher induction and ongoing, focused professional development. Intake training is designed to introduce the skills needed to effectively teach in a hybrid distance learning model. Professional development is ongoing/career long and is centered on 2 themes: using data available in the hybrid distance learning environment to drive student achievement and best hybrid instructional practices.

INTAKE TRAINING (FOUR WEEKS)

Intake training for new teachers is designed with one goal in mind: that on day 1, teachers are "ready to teach." Each school year, new Academy teachers will undergo intake training provided by the Academy and the curriculum provider that is based on an effective model of professional development. The professional development emphasizes the philosophy and instructional techniques which are the foundations of the Academy and the K^{12} curriculum. Mastery of content and skills is a crucial aspect of student achievement. The Academy's professional development goals are in direct alignment with the school's educational philosophy and instructional techniques. Consistent with the Academy's philosophy, teachers are not simply participants in a student's learning; they are the leaders and the guides. It is their duty to be responsible for student achievement. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the administrators to ensure their teachers have all the right tools and training to be effective.

The core of the intake training includes the following topics:
- K^{12} Philosophy and Instructional Techniques
- K^{12} Curriculum
- K^{12} Online School
- The Job of a Hybrid School Teacher – Blending Distance Learning and Face to Face Instruction
- Measuring Student Progress
- Special Education
- Communication in a Distance Learning Setting
- Standardized Testing
- Working at A Distance
- The Blended Learning/Hybrid Community

An array of school specific training will be added to supplement the core intake training, including:
- The Sandia Academy Hybrid Model
- Adapting the K^{12} Curriculum for Classroom Use
- Classroom Management, The First Days of School, Harry Wong
- Web Conferencing
- Technology (Email Set Up, Outlook 101, etc.)
- Building a School Community both Off Site and Face to Face

New teacher induction begins with a multi-day, face-to-face event presented in the first year by the staff and the curriculum provider. New teacher induction is a year long process designed to provide initial training and ongoing support for teachers and administrators new to the system. During the first week, participants meet face-to-face covering topics included in the list above. During subsequent weeks and months throughout the school year, participants work from their home environments and participate in online asynchronous and synchronous sessions designed to hone their skills as blended solution educators. Teachers also participate in monthly, school specific, face

to face trainings and professional development offerings. New teachers and administrators are paired with veterans/mentors for follow up and feedback.

National Ongoing Professional Development and Support

The Academy will take advantage of the K^{12} centrally developed ongoing online professional development and support opportunities for teachers that are designed to complement the monthly face to face school specific offerings. All Academy teachers will be expected to participate in monthly National Professional Development opportunities. Staff surveys determine the topics for these sessions.

School Specific Professional Development

School specific professional development opportunities are closely linked to the school's Student Achievement Improvement Process (SAIP). The responsibility for planning and providing the school specific ongoing professional development belongs to the Head Administrator. Monthly face-to-face sessions provide teachers the opportunity for sharing best practices and team building as well as presentations by curriculum experts. The online synchronous web conferencing and presentation tool, Elluminate Live! will also be used to enhance the monthly face to face professional development offerings.

Administrator Training

In addition to the intake/induction trainings that administrators attend with teachers, they also will attend separate training in the Albuquerque area specific to administrators' responsibilities and challenges including team leadership, differentiated instruction, special education, strategic planning, community building, data-driven decision making, and board development.

Professional Development after Year 1

In the years after the initial year of operation, the school will keep focusing on topics relevant to the development of the teacher and administrator leadership teams, teacher and administrator professional development, student achievement and school specific topics. Ongoing target topics will include training interventions and their efficacy; programs for gifted and at-risk learners; performance on all state testing; best practices in the use of synchronous instructional tools (e.g., Elluminate web conferencing) to improve student performance; and best practices for training parents and/or guardians to be more effective in supporting math and reading instruction. Topics introduced in the initial year of operation will be revisited on a yearly basis with updated national best practice learning, innovations or implementations incorporated.

B. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1. Length of School Day and School Year:

- **State the proposed length of the school day, including the number of instructional hours;**

  Sandia Academy will comply with the state requirements for the number of instructional hours per day while students are attending the Learning Center and while they are in their distance learning setting, that is: a minimum of 5.5 hours per day for kindergarten through sixth grade and a minimum of 6 hours per day for Grades 7-12. Instructional hours may be divided between the Learning Center and the distance learning setting in a way that will be most advantageous to an individual student.

- **State the proposed length of the school year, including number of days and total number of instructional hours.**

  Sandia Academy will comply with the state requirement for 180 full instructional days in the school year as well as complying with the requirements for daily instructional hours. The total minimum number of instructional hours will be 990 for kindergarten through sixth grade and 1,080 for grades 7-12. Teachers will be under contract for 195 days each year including 180 instructional days, 10 training days prior to the start of the school year and 5 days for year end transition after the school year ends.

- **Describe how the proposed length of the school day and school year support the Educational Plan.**

  Since students will have access to the Online School twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, other than holidays, there are no other days in which less than a full day of learning and instruction could take place. The Academy assumes that the minimum requirements for the length of the school day and the number of instructional hours will be exceeded by many students.

2. **Grade Levels, Class Size and Projected Enrollment:**

- **State the grade levels the charter school proposes to serve.**

  The Sandia Academy will open in the fall of 2010 serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

- **If a phase-in of grade levels is proposed, indicate plans for the phase in by year and grade levels, and provide a rationale for the phase-in plan.**

  A phase-in of grade levels is not proposed. Please see table in immediately following question/answer.

- **State the total projected student enrollment (maximum enrollment for the school).**

School Year		Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment
First Year	2010-11	K-12	500
Second Year	2011-12	K-12	500
Third Year	2012-13	K-12	500
Fourth Year	2013-14	K-12	500
Fifth Year	2014-15	K-12	500

- **State the projected class size.**

When students in grades K-8 attend courses on site at the Learning Center, there will be a student to teacher ratio of 20 to 1. When students in grades 9-12 attend courses on site at the Learning Center there will be a student to teacher ratio of 25 to 1. These class loads are less than the maximum class loads allowed in the New Mexico School Personnel Act [22-10A-20 NMSA 1978]. Students will attend sessions at the Academy's Learning Center no less than one day per week. Those students needing additional assistance may attend more frequently. Attendance requirements may be modified based on a student's particular circumstances or needs. Distance learning classes will higher student to teacher ratios but will be of a size that teachers can effectively manage and students will successfully continue to learn.

3. **Graduation Requirements (if applicable):**

- **Describe the proposed credits and requirements for graduation.**

New Mexico Diploma of Excellence Requirements

Sandia Academy is proposed to open in the fall of 2010. Students will successfully complete the requirements for the New Mexico Diploma of Excellence. This entails successfully completing a minimum of twenty-four units aligned to the state academic content and performance standards. Final examinations shall be administered to all students in all classes offered for credit. The units required for completion in order to graduate are:

    (1)   four units in English, with major emphasis on grammar, nonfiction writing and literature;

    (2)   four units in mathematics, of which one shall be the equivalent to or higher than the level of algebra 2, unless the parent submits written, signed permission for the student to complete a lesser mathematics unit;

(3) three units in science, two of which shall have a laboratory component;

(4) three and one-half units in social science, which shall include United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics, and one-half unit of New Mexico history;

(5) one unit in physical education;

(6) one unit in one of the following: a career cluster course or workplace readiness;

(7) seven and one-half elective units that meet department content and performance standards. Two units of a World Language will be required among the seven and one-half electives. Student service learning shall be offered as an elective. Financial literacy shall be offered as an elective.

(8) As required by 22-13-1.1 (G) NMSA 1978 At least one of the units required for graduation shall be earned as an advanced placement or honors course, a dual-credit course offered in cooperation with an institution of higher education or a distance learning course.

Please note: Since the Academy curriculum for all grades K-12 is composed entirely of distance learning courses, Sandia Academy considers this requirement to be met by the students' enrollment in the school.

In addition to completing the units described above, in order to receive a New Mexico diploma of excellence, Academy students must demonstrate competence in the subject areas of mathematics, reading and language arts, writing, social studies and science, including a section on the constitution of the United States and the constitution of New Mexico, based on a standards-based assessment or assessments or a portfolio of standards-based indicators established by the department by rule. The standards-based assessments required in Section 22-2C-4 NMSA 1978 may also serve as the assessment required for high school graduation. If an Academy student exits from the school system at the end of grade twelve without having satisfied the requirements of this subsection, the student shall receive an appropriate state certificate indicating the number of credits earned and the grade completed. If within five years after a student exits from the school system the student satisfies the requirement of this subsection, the student may receive a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence.

Interim and Final Next-Step Plans

In addition to the required units, in accordance with 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978, the following will also be required:

(1) At the end of grades eight through eleven, each student shall prepare an interim next-step plan that sets forth the coursework for the grades remaining until high school graduation. Each year's plan shall explain any differences from previous interim next-step plans, shall be filed with the Academy's High School Coordinator and shall be signed by the student, the student's parent and the student's guidance counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student.

(2) Each student must complete a final next-step plan during the senior year and prior to graduation. The plan shall be filed with the Academy's High School Coordinator and shall be signed by the student, the student's parent and the student's guidance counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student.

(3) An individualized education program that meets the requirements of Subsections 1 and 2 of this section and that meets all applicable transition and procedural requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for a student with a disability shall satisfy the next-step plan requirements of this section for that student.

(4) The Academy Governing Board shall ensure that each high school student has the opportunity to develop a next-step plan based on reports of college and workplace readiness assessments, as available, and other factors and is reasonably informed about:

   a. curricular and course options, including honors or advanced placement courses, dual-credit courses, distance learning courses, career clusters or remediation programs that the college and workplace readiness assessments indicate to be appropriate;

   b. opportunities available that lead to different post-high-school options; and

   c. alternative opportunities available if the student does not finish a planned curriculum.

- **Describe how any proposed requirements that differ from the New Mexico Graduation Requirements [22-13-1.1.] support the school's educational plan.**

  According to 22-8B-5 (C), the New Mexico Public Education Department shall waive the requirement pertaining to driver education. Sandia Academy will not provide driver education. Academy students may be referred to third party driver education providers. (see **Section VIII. Requirements B. Waivers**)

- **Describe how any proposed requirements that differ from the New Mexico Graduation Requirements [22-13-1.1.] support the school's educational plan.**

  The only proposed graduation requirements that differ from the New Mexico Graduation Requirements [22-13-1.1] is that two units of a World Language will be required among the required seven and one-half electives.

C. STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Student academic performance is central to a school's existence. Student performance expectations must be aligned with the mission and the educational plan. The student performance expectations will:

- **Provide student-centered goals that are SMART:**
  - **Specific;**
  - **Measurable;**
  - **Ambitious and Attainable**
  - **Reflective of the school's mission;**
  - **Time-Specific with Target Dates**
- **Provide student-centered goals that are aligned with the school's mission and the educational plan.**

The Governing Body, administration, and teaching staff will share a common vision for student success that is measurable and meaningful. We view it as our responsibility to educate the whole child, and feel that the tools for success lie in a strong foundation in academic content. The following are goals the school will strive to accomplish in its initial five years of operation:

1. Academic Goals:
(a) Students will demonstrate mastery of a curriculum that meets or exceeds the New Mexico's New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards:
- In all grades, all students will master the K[12] curriculum aligned to New Mexico New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards, attaining the knowledge and skills that New Mexico has identified students should acquire in each subject area and at each grade level.
- All students in grades three through ten will demonstrate their mastery in reading and math through participation in New Mexico's state assessment program, the New Mexico

Standards Based Assessment (SBA).   On average, students will perform at or above the proficient level on the SBA.

- All students in grades three through eight and ten will demonstrate their mastery in reading and math through participation in the Scantron Performance and Achievement Series Assessments in Mathematics and Reading.
- All students in grades K through two and other students as indicated in their intervention plans will demonstrate gains in early literacy skills through participation in the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments.
- All students will pass the New Mexico high School Competency Examination prior to high school graduation.
- All students will participate in state, authorizer, and school required assessments.

(b) **SBA:** (1) For students in grades 3-8 and 11, Sandia Academy expects to reach at least the following Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for every grade level assessed by the SBA in both Reading and Math:

	Percentage of Sandia Academy Students Reaching AMO	
School Year	**Reading**	**Math**
SY 2010-2011	75%	65%
SY 2011-2012	79%	76%
SY 2012-2013	89%	86%
SY 2013-2014	100%	100%

(2) For all students participating in the SBA, the Academy will attain a Participation Rate of 95 percent or greater.

(c) For students in grades K-2 participating in the DIBELS early reading diagnostic assessment, Sandia Academy expects that 80 percent of all students, at each grade level, each year, will attain the following end-of-year benchmark scores:

- Kindergarten: total score of 25 on nonsense word fluency, total score of 35 on phoneme segmentation fluency, total score of 25 on initial sound fluency. Letter name fluency should also be mastered by the end of kindergarten
- 1st grade: 40 words /min on oral reading and a total score of 50 on nonsense word fluency
- 2nd grade: 90 words/ min on oral reading fluency
- 3rd grade: 110 words/min. on oral reading fluency

(d) Students in grades K through 12 will demonstrate proficiency in language arts:

- Students will develop and use the conventions of successful composition: spelling, grammar, mechanics, and penmanship.
- Students will develop and use an advanced vocabulary in verbal and written communications.
- Students will grasp meaning, content, tone, and style from a variety of genres (i.e., fiction, poetry, essays, news articles).
- Students will gain exposure to as well as an appreciation for great works of literature.

- Students will master the skills of the writing process: researching, brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.
- Students will develop and use a variety of writing strategies appropriate for different audiences and purposes—persuasive, creative, descriptive, and research writing—by the end of eighth grade.
- Students will demonstrate their proficiency in language arts through participation in the state testing program. On average, students will perform at or above the proficient level on the SBA.

(e) Students in grade K through 12 will demonstrate proficiency in mathematics:
- Students will understand and apply basic and advanced properties of numbers (ranging from the concept of whole numbers to the theorems of roots and exponents).
- Students will use basic and advanced procedures while performing computations (ranging from adding whole numbers to simplifying radical expressions).
- Students will understand and apply basic and advanced properties of the concept of measurement (ranging from determining length and width to the acceleration of the Space Shuttle).
- Students will understand and apply the basic and advanced properties of algebra, geometry, statistics, and probability.
- Students will apply mathematical skills to solve real-world problems.
- Students will demonstrate their proficiency in mathematics through participation in the state testing program. On average, students will perform at or above the proficient level on the SBA.

(f) Students will develop a strong foundation of knowledge, facts, and skills in History, Geography, Civics, Science, Art, Music, Economics, and other disciplines:
- Students will use this base of information to understand the important connections among these disciplines and their application in daily living.
- Students will be able to identify and draw on these interdisciplinary connections when faced with complex issues and problems, demonstrating an ability to approach them from multiple perspectives.
- Students will achieve 80% or higher mastery on all coursework related to History, Geography, Civics, Science, Art, Music, and Economics as measure by the OLS lesson assessments.

(g) Students will develop critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills:
- Students will demonstrate the use of problem-solving and analytical techniques on open-ended questions by the fifth grade.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize alternative positions and evaluate their validity by the fifth grade.
- Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply their knowledge as demonstrated through lesson assessments with a minimum of 80% mastery on lessons requiring the student to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply knowledge.

(h) Students will acquire skills in both art and music as part of their aesthetic development:
- Students will understand and implement artistic and musical techniques.

- Students will know and be able to speak intelligently about great works of art and music.
- Students will develop a sense of the history of art and music and how ideas, movements, and trends from one era inform another.
- Students will achieve 80% or higher mastery on art and music curriculum as measure by the OLS lesson assessments.

2. Non-Academic Goals:

Our primary non-academic goal is to develop those qualities of mind and character that will help our students develop into active, thoughtful, and responsible citizens. Our choice of materials and approach are designed to communicate and build commonly shared values such as honesty, integrity, courage, discipline, compassion, respect for others, and appreciation of the work ethic. While children are learning the basics of computation, decoding, and analysis, they will also be wrestling with moral dilemmas, writing about courage and justice, and learning about times when history was shaped by moral surrender and heroic deeds.

(a) To create a powerful partnership between satisfied Sandia Academy parents and teachers, combining forces to ensure that children receive individual attention and achieve academic excellence. This goal will be measured in two ways:
- Parental satisfaction: 70% or more of parents/mentors in 2010-2011, 80% or more of parents or mentors in 2011-2012, and 90% of parents or other primary adults in 2012-2013 will be satisfied with the academic progress their student is making while enrolled in Sandia Academy; and
- Professional Development: 95% of Academy teachers each year will participate in networking and professional development opportunities with the goal of improving student academic achievement in math and reading. This goal is measured by the percentage of Sandia Academy teachers participating in professional development.

Parents and teachers will help us to continuously evaluate the operation and governance of the school both online and offline. The Academy will survey parents and teachers online each year to determine their satisfaction with their overall experience in the Academy, including the curriculum, instruction, OLS, administration, support, quality and delivery of materials, working with the lessons, student progress, student attitude towards learning, communication, and interaction with other Academy students and parents. Parents and teachers will be offered the opportunity to give critiques and/or testimonials about the program.

(b) Students will be responsible for the improvement of their school and local community:
- Students will participate in assessments required by the school, including the SBA and Scantron Performance and Achievement Series assessments. This goal is measured based on the percentage of students participating in required assessments.
- Students will participate in school activities and events (whether electronically or physically).
- Students will exercise a voice in school affairs and will work to improve the educational and social life of their school.
- Students will be encouraged to volunteer in their communities on various school-related or civic projects.

- Students will learn about individuals who have contributed their talents and efforts to improve our country and our world.

(c) Students will develop important personal traits such as honesty, courage, loyalty, personal responsibility, perseverance, respect for others, and diligence:
- Students will take responsibility for their actions and will be asked and encouraged to learn from their mistakes.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to work in teams and will work toward personal, team, and school goals.
- Students will understand and be able to explain the value of our country's vibrant diversity and common civic heritage.
- Students will demonstrate respect for others in school, community, and extracurricular activities and an appreciation of differences among individuals and groups.

(d) Students will develop effective work habits and skills that will prepare them for the demands of school, society, business, government, and civic affairs:
- Students will learn to work effectively with technology and become proficient users of software, e-mail, and the Internet.
- Students will participate in regular conferences with teachers and parents. This goal is measured by actual student participation in scheduled conferences.
- Students shall submit the required work samples every month. Sandia Academy teachers shall provide feedback at least once a month on the samples provided. This goal is measured based on the number of samples submitted.
- Students will develop an understanding of the dynamics and importance of entrepreneurship.
- Students will learn to collaborate effectively with other students.
- Students will be expected to meet deadlines and make clear and compelling multimedia presentations.

(e) Students will rise to meet high expectations of behavior and performance:
- Students will be expected to give their best effort in their schoolwork and their active participation in school events.
- Students will respect their parents, teachers, and fellow students and abide by the school's guidelines and rules.
- Students will learn to interact maturely with peers and adults.
- Students will conduct themselves with integrity at all times.

(f) Students will learn habits of healthy living:
- Students will attend to their social, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Students will learn to balance school responsibilities (on- and off-line) with the other demands of their lives (personal, family, social, athletic, artistic).
- Students will engage in social activities and school events to enrich their academic work with real-world experiences.

D. PLAN FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A Plan for Evaluating Student Performance must address the following components:

- **the types of assessments that will be used to measure student progress toward achievement of the NM Standards and the school's student performance expectations;**
- **the timeline for achievement of the NM Standards and/or the school's student performance expectations;**
- **the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance falls below the NM Standards and/or the school's student performance expectations;**
- **remediation for students not achieving standards, including a timeline for implementation of the remediation plan;**
- **assessments that might be considered in addition to the statewide-mandated testing;**
- **documentation and reporting of student data to students and parents.**

As extensive research shows, good feedback and assessment are critical to efficient and successful learning. Because K^{12} is committed to student learning, assessment is an integral part of the curriculum. Assessments help the parent, teacher, and student to see that the student is achieving important learning objectives. Assessments show growth and progress, as well as any areas that might need extra work. The assessments also help Sandia Academy to improve the school by providing information on the effectiveness of specific instructional activities and the curriculum overall. Student achievement gains will be continuously measured and reported to students, parents, teachers, administrators and the Board during the school year.

- Each grade 3-8 and grade 10 student must take the Scantron Performance Assessment in Mathematics and Reading in the fall to determine a benchmark for measuring growth and to enable the teacher to develop an individualized learning plan for each student. This assessment is a computer adaptive test meaning that the student's answers to previous questions adapt the difficulty of the subsequent question. All students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 will take the Scantron Performance Assessment again in the spring to measure the "effect" of the educational program on students. The results are analyzed to determine gains of students while enrolled in Sandia Academy. Gain reports look at where the students started relative to the Scantron national norm group data and how much growth students made as compared to their peers in the Scantron national norm group. Students' academic growth in the various areas of the tests is also analyzed. Initial fall scores area also used to predict success on the end of the year state test for all students who take the fall Performance Series assessment. Students who do not have a score that is high enough to predict success on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA) will receive focused remediation (see next paragraph). (Please also refer to **Section V.A.1.** of the application for examples of gains made by students in schools using the K^{12} curriculum.)

- The Scantron Achievement Series will also be administered to each student on a set schedule in order to measure attainment of New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards throughout the course of the school year. The Achievement Series tests are made from Scantron item bank questions that align specifically to state standards. The Achievement Series tests are created with the assistance of K^{12} on site in each school and are different from state to state. They may be single standards exams, with multiple questions on one standard, or longer, multi-standard exams with multiple questions on multiple standards. Each Achievement Series test will measure student attainment of a specific New Mexico standard. This test is a tool to help determine where students' areas of challenge exist and to determine if supplemental instruction aimed at those areas is effective or if a different type of instruction is needed. All students in grades 3–10 will be assessed on tested standards in order to determine the individual student's need for focused remediation if necessary. All standards will be assessed and remediated as necessary prior to the administration of New Mexico Statewide Assessment Program (NMSAP) tests in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. Remediation will be provided by direct instruction from teachers using a variety of remedial resources which are specific to the student's demonstrated weakness on a discrete New Mexico standard.
- Students will fully participate in the New Mexico Statewide Assessment Program (NMSAP) tests as applicable at the appropriate age levels, including the SBA, New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment, New Mexico High School Competency Examination, New Mexico English Language Placement Test, and New Mexico English Language Proficiency Assessment.
- All results of diagnostic assessments, including Scantron Performance and Achievement series, will be reported to parents through-out the school year. For example, the Scantron Performance Series results, which provide a scaled score and national percentage ranking, will be provided to students within the first month of the school year. The Performance Series will provide an immediate indication of New Mexico standards that need focused review and possible remediation. The Performance Series will be re-administered in the spring in order to ascertain growth. These results will be provided to parents during the last month of school. Performance on the Scantron Achievement Series diagnostic assessments, each focused on one discrete New Mexico standard, will be administered on a set schedule through-out each school quarter. These results will be shared with parents as administered. SBA test results will be provided when available.
- Data from Scantron diagnostic testing will be reviewed in the school at the grade, subject (math and reading), classroom, and student level by administrators and teachers no less than quarterly in order to review the success of intervention strategies with struggling students. The school will develop a Student Achievement Improvement Plan based on data from all available sources which will be reviewed no less than quarterly throughout the course of the school year in order to ensure grade level progress toward New Mexico standards.

- High school students' transcripts are reviewed to determine if necessary prerequisite courses have been successfully completed.
- The K^{12} curriculum integrates a variety of formative and summative content-specific assessment instruments within each course. K^{12} assessments employ a variety of formats, allowing students to demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of ways. Some assessment items are presented, answered and scored online, and others are short or extended constructed responses that are evaluated by the teacher. Item types include multiple choice, matching, short answer, and constructed response items.
- **Lesson Assessments** are used to verify mastery of the objectives for that lesson, and to determine whether a review of some or the entire lesson is advisable. When content is presented using platforms that support adaptivity, lesson assessments can also determine the learner path.
- **Unit Assessments** show whether the student has retained key learning objectives for the unit, and identify specific objectives students may need to review before moving on.
- **Semester Assessments** verify student mastery of key learning objectives for the semester.

E. SPECIAL POPULATIONS

A plan must provide a description of the how the charter's school educational program will meet the individual needs of Special Populations which addresses the following components:

- **suggested modifications to the proposed educational program to meet individual student needs, such as bilingual, limited English proficient, and special education;**

Modifications and Accommodations

As required, Sandia Academy will work to accommodate students with all disabilities who are using the K^{12} web-based courses at the Learning Center and in a distance learning setting. The Academy will offer necessary accommodations by procuring the agreed-upon technology and other services to aid these students in navigating through their courses. Further, K^{12}'s experience making web-based content more accessible to students with disabilities includes incorporating audio and video enhancements into the courses and using equivalent alternatives to accommodate various disabilities, such as using text equivalents and various forms of assistive technology. All materials meet the requirements of the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS).

In addition to a team approach to serving students with disabilities, there may be necessary modifications accommodations that will ensure students achieve New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards. (Please refer to the following table.)

Instructional Enhancements	Assessment Enhancements
Use interactive groupings of students in structured and purposeful settings. Draw on Student background and knowledge. Teach skills explicitly as appropriate and ensure opportunities for students to apply and practice skills in a meaningful context.	Use multiple forms of assessment such as performance-based assessments. Create appropriate test settings; use magnification of print or sound, use color-coding to focus attention where appropriate, allow for frequent breaks, use of calculators and dictionaries, and minimize distractions and Interruptions.
Use graphic organizers to model organization skills and to engage students in the process. Use manipulative and connect learning experiences to real life. Use community experts as resources and as models. Minimize interruptions and distractions during time-on-task. Check often for understanding among students. Teach students organizational and study skills. Ensure access to resources in the languages, reading levels, and interests of the students.	Integrate technology into a variety of assessment settings. Remind students to use self-monitoring strategies and clarify directions. Ensure that language and academic skills are assessed appropriately. Take dictation for students, allow for tape and/or video recordings. Use multiple measures of assessment to access language and academic skills of two language learners. Include samples of second language learners' work as anchors when developing rubrics and other scoring devices.
Standards Primer: A Guide to Standards-p8	Based Education in New Mexico Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations.

Response to Intervention and the Student Assistance Team

Sandia Academy will use a three tiered Response to Intervention process to determine the needs of a student who may be having difficulty or requires enrichment (see below). The Student Assistance Team will consist of the Head Administrator, referring teacher, counselor, parent and student. They will meet on an on-going basis, as needed, to determine areas of concern and develop the appropriately leveled interventions. These interventions will be implemented and progress will be monitored before reconvening the team. The team may reconvene and determine that the situation necessitates more intense interventions and/or evaluation for special education services. Examples of interventions include, but are not limited to: one on one or small group synchronous tutoring, computer based skills tutor with teacher oversight, counseling, etc.

- In **Tier 1,** all students are screened (universal screening) for potential problems. All students also receive appropriate, standards-based, core instruction including any classroom, grade-level, or school-wide interventions (universal interventions) for academics and behavior. Tier 1 universal interventions are provided in the general education classroom.
- In **Tier 2,** students who have not responded significantly to the Tier I core program with universal interventions are referred to the school's Student Assistance Team (SAT) and may receive a targeted, individual intervention plan. This plan could include more intense instruction, individually or in a small group, and is provided in addition to the general education curriculum. Students with disabilities who do not qualify for special education services may also be served at this tier through a Section 504 accommodations plan.
- In **Tier 3**, a student qualifies for special education services or the state criteria of gifted, and receives specially-designed instruction and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

    http://www.ped.state.nm.us/RtI/rule.html

Gifted or "Exceptional" Learners

A gifted student is defined as a school-age person whose intellectual ability paired with subject matter aptitude/achievement, creativity/divergent thinking and/or problem solving/critical thinking meets the eligibility criteria and for whom a properly constituted IEP team determines that special education services are required to meet the student's educational needs. (6.31.2.12 NMAC)

The Academy will first identify their gifted population through the Child Find process which includes parental input, teacher input and a records review. Students who are demonstrating characteristics of an exceptional learning will be referred to the SAT team. If warranted, this team may review the Frasier Traits, Aptitudes and Behavior scales and the student may be referred for an initial evaluation that determines eligibility for services. If services are warranted, an

IEP will be written to determine the appropriate services and delivery model to meet the student's exceptional needs.

Differentiated learning experiences will be developed, with student input. The Academy curriculum allows for individualized levels, pace, style and subject for all students unique learning needs. A continuum of programming services are inherent to the mastery based distance learning curriculum used by the Academy. The Academy will employ a gifted education service provider to ensure this continuum is modeling and monitored for all students.

Professional development about the characteristics of giftedness and best instructional practices in meeting the needs of this exceptional population will be provided to all staff.

English Language Learners

The English Language Learner (ELL) population falls into three basic categories: students whose primary or home language is other than English including recent immigrants; students from heritage language groups needing enrichment and further development of academic English, some of whom maintain degrees of fluency in their heritage language; and any other students needing enrichment and further development of academic English. (NMELD Objective 6.29.5.6) These students are not yet proficient/fluent in listening, speaking, reading and writing the English language.

Sandia Academy will first identify these students during the enrollment process using the Child Find process referenced below. In addition to the Child Find process, a home language survey, teacher observation and student language survey will be completed. A language proficiency assessment (yearly) as well as culminating data on the student's academic performance scores will become part of the components that develop his/her individual education plan. The school will employ, as needed, an appropriately licensed ESL or bi-lingual teacher for the ELL identified students. The contracted ESL teacher can provide support to the students within the distance learning or Learning Center environment by: relating background information and experiences to the students to better grasp a concept, scaffold instruction to aid the students in comprehension, adjusting speech or content, providing project based learning experiences, necessary visuals and providing in classroom modeling of best instructional practices for the general education teachers.

Professional development will be provided to all staff on the following: research-based bilingual/multi cultural programs and implications for instruction, best practices of English as a Second Language (ESL), English Language Development (ELD) and /or language revitalization programs and the principles of language acquisition.

- **an <u>outline</u> of a special education plan** *(the final plan of which must be completed and submitted to the charter authorizer by the end of the planning year)* **that demonstrates understanding of state and federal special education requirements including the fundamental obligation to provide a free, appropriate education to students identified with disabilities;**

Students with disabilities will be served in accordance with federal and state regulations including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (and amendments thereto, at 29 USC Section 794 et seq. and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR Section 104), and the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act ("IDEA" at 10 USC Section 14010 et seq. and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR section 300). A free and appropriate education will be provided to such students in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as required by the IDEA and 504 plans as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the most recent, Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA).

Child Find

The Academy enrollment application, a conference call with a K[12] placement counselor, and conference calls with an Academy general education teacher will all provide a query for the parent to indicate a student with special education or gifted education needs. In addition, a careful review of previous school records by the Academy's Special Education Coordinator will be undertaken upon receipt of such records to identify any students enrolling who have previously been identified as a student with a disability or exceptionality. The Academy general education teachers will be provided professional development prior to and during the school year on their child find responsibilities, including possible indicators of special education and exceptional needs related to achievement and behaviors. Since the Academy will be enrolling students in communities across the state, posting and public notification within school districts concerning the process for screening and the availability of special services and programs of instruction for students with disabilities and exceptionalities will be on the Academy's website, in addition to being sent via electronic and/or U.S. postal service mail to all enrolled families.

Special Education Services and Support

All identified students with a disability will have an Academy IEP meeting upon enrollment with the appropriate team members in attendance. This IEP will include a statement of the student's current level of performance and how the student's disability affects his/her ability to progress through the general education curriculum, a statement of measurable goals and a statement of educational services, program modification and support necessary for the student to be involved in the general education coursework, including assistive technology. The means for learning and demonstrating proficiency will be aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards. Assessment accommodations or alternative instruction procedures will be based on the objectives in the student's IEP.

If a student has a behavioral need, the Academy will implement a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). The IEP team will consider, when appropriate, strategies including positive behavioral interventions, strategies and support to address that behavior through the IEP process (Section 614(d)(3)(B)(i) of IDEA).

Students with special needs will be supported by the Academy's regular education teacher in the least restrictive environment, in addition to receiving the supportive services of a special education teacher. The student's IEP will determine the type and amount of services necessary to meet the goals of the IEP. Related service providers, if required, are located within the geographical vicinity of the student. These related services may be provided through contracts with the student's school district of residence or a private agency/provider.

Students with disabilities will participate in the general education program to the greatest extent possible offered by the Academy and as determined by the IEP team. The Academy special education teacher will support students with disabilities and provide specially designed instruction through synchronous and asynchronous contact which may include phone conferencing, email, and direct "real-time" interaction through a web-conferencing tool as well as direct support at the Learning Center, if applicable. With web conferencing, the special education teacher/general education teacher can provide real time support to the student and assessment of progress towards IEP goals. In addition, parent education can be effectively delivered using web conferencing   Students with disabilities will fully participate in all general education classroom activities with their classmates including outings and field trips. If necessary, transportation will be provided to accommodate the special needs of the student as determined by the IEP team.
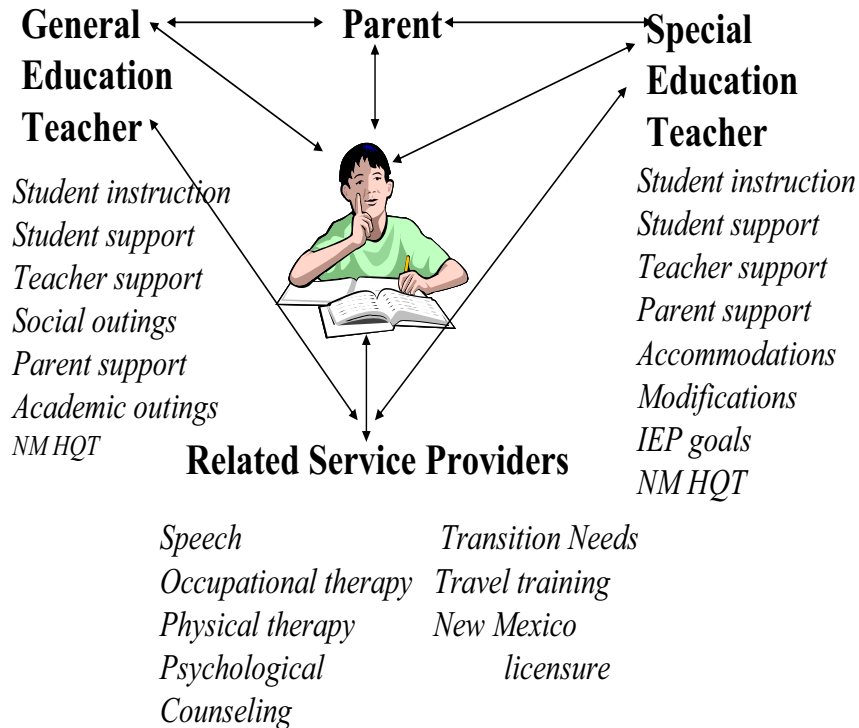
Sandia Academy will ensure that each student with a disability is placed in the least restrictive environment. Due to the ability of the student to access the general education web-based curriculum at anytime, the student receiving special education services or programs within the general education classroom is not missing any general education instruction. The only possible exception to this would be related services at the Learning Center.

Oversight and compliance monitoring in a distance learning setting and in the Learning Center are assured through many means including detailed monitoring of student progress and achievement both in the general education curriculum and on IEP goals through work sample collection, synchronous instruction and assessment, and assessment data collected through the online school by a highly qualified general education teacher; and file review and monitoring of timelines and processes by the Special Education Coordinator at the school.

The Academy believes that it takes a complete team of individuals working with the student with a disability to ensure academic success. As such, frequent and relevant synchronous and asynchronous communication between all parties is delivered

through phone conferencing, notes, emails and web conferencing tools. (Please see diagram below.)

Model of Hybrid Distance Learning
Special Education Services

General Education Teacher

Student instruction
Student support
Teacher support
Social outings
Parent support
Academic outings
NM HQT

Parent

Special Education Teacher

Student instruction
Student support
Teacher support
Parent support
Accommodations
Modifications
IEP goals
NM HQT

Related Service Providers

Speech	*Transition Needs*
Occupational therapy	*Travel training*
Physical therapy	*New Mexico*
Psychological	*licensure*
Counseling	

- **how the charter school will provide access to ancillary services including, but not limited to, counseling and health.**

The student's IEP will determine the type and amount of services necessary to meet the goals of the IEP. Related service providers, if required, are located within the geographical vicinity of the student. These related services may be provided through contracts with the student's school district of residence or a private agency/provider.

In addition to teachers and mentors, a variety of counseling support services will be available to ensure that the Academy and its all its students, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities effectively meet their educational needs and goals. For instance, each student is assigned a school counselor to assist them in the transition from Middle School to High School and with academic achievement planning. Advisors are utilized to serve as a single point of contact for every student, "following" the student from grade to grade as they progress through the high school program. These advisors can serve to keep a close focus on the overall academic well-being of each student in the school.

Please see **Section VII. Governance/Management Plan, Subsection H**. **Other Students Services** for a detailed description of the Academy's plans for providing counseling and health services.

VI. 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.

A. BUDGET

- **Provide a completed revenue projection form 910B5** *(downloadable from http://www.ped.state.nm.us/charter/index.html; include completed form 910B5 in appendices).*

  Form 910B5 is included in this application as **Appendix 3.**

- **Provide a balanced proposed operating budget covering each year of the charter term based on current unit value using the Budget Spreadsheet** *(downloadable from http://www.ped.state.nm.us/charter/index.html; include completed Budget Spreadsheet in appendices).*

  The proposed operating budget covering each year of the charter term is included in this application as **Appendix 4**.

- **Provide a detailed narrative description of the revenue and expenditure assumptions on which the operating budget is based. The budget narrative should provide sufficient information to fully understand how budgetary figures were determined. Address the following:**
  - **major start-up expenses, including staffing and benefits; special education services; facility costs; materials and services; and contracted services; and**
  - **spending priorities that align with the school's mission, educational program, management structure, professional development needs, and growth plan.**

  Revenue assumptions: The Academy's budget assumes the school will receive the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) for students. The funding is driven by specific enrollment assumptions.

  Enrollment assumptions: The Academy plans to enroll 500 students during its first year of operation; 150 high school students and 350 K-8 students. The Academy expects approximately 8 percent of its students to have formal Individualized

Education Plans (IEPs) during the first year, and this will likely grow to 11 percent within three years. The ninth grade will be the largest high school grade. Students in K-8 will be evenly distributed between the grade levels. Most schools with a similar instructional model as the Academy resemble the statewide public school enrollment population by the end of the first three years of operation. The Academy assumes it will enroll a similar percent of low-income students as the general public school population. However, the Academy did not plan for additional funding for these students. The Academy will develop supplemental services for these students and apply first for targeted assistance Title funds to meet their needs. These revenues and services will be supplemental to the core instructional program provided through the SEG funds.

The Academy did not budget for increased enrollments over the five year pro forma budget term. The Academy expects to develop a waiting list during the first year and to prepare expansion requests, including budgets, as needed and appropriate.

Teacher expenses: To implement the curriculum of the school The Academy will ensure that teachers have access to the learning management system anywhere, including the Learning Center or offsite locations. .Teachers will be issued a lap top, print/fax/scanner, shredder (to destroy sensitive documents), head set, telephone and locking storage. The budget includes $300 per teacher per year for travel for offsite professional development and other school related business, and $1140 per teacher to ensure connectivity to the Learning Management System. The budget provides $300 per teacher per year for professional development (in addition to training provided through the start-up grant). Teachers will receive a complete set of curriculum materials that students receive. The budget includes sufficient funds to ensure that teachers have online accounts within the learning management system in order to access a complete set of curriculum, student information system, test preparation tools, and all reporting tools. Teachers will serve approximately 20-25 students within the classroom and additional students in the distance learning setting. The budget also provides teachers with an effective real-time web-based classroom (Elluminate) to teach students in a distance learning setting.

Student expenses: The budget assumes that 60 percent of the K-8 students and 75 percent of the high school students will check out a computer system, from the Academy. The system includes a desk top computer, a print/fax/scanner and a headset. Students will also receive course materials and learning management system access for an average of six courses. Individual students may enroll in additional or fewer courses based on special needs, graduation deficiencies, etc. The Academy plans on spending an average of $25 per student for test administration expenses, including facility rental and teacher travel expense for proctoring. The Academy plans on spending an average of $2000 per special education student per year for evaluation and related service provision. Initial assistive technology for these students will be funded out of the start-up grant. The Academy plans on spending $45,000 per year to support the student educational activities of the hybrid program (in addition to rent, facilities, etc.).

School Administration and Governance: The budget assumes significant legal expenses during the planning and first year to cover policy review and procurement advice as the Academy contracts with vendors for goods and services. The budget includes an audit fee for the planning year and each operational year. The Academy plans to provide and/or contract for services, including student recruitment, technology management, a student information system management system, and special education relations services. The Academy budget plans for board training during the planning year and each operational year, which shall include participation in New Mexico Public Education Department mandated training and may include membership in the New Mexico Coalition for Charter schools and national conference events.

Insurance, facilities, other: The Academy has analyzed property rental rates and utility rates (phone, internet, water, electricity) for the community in which the school site will be located. The Academy also plans to use a conference call service to enable teachers and parents from throughout the state to participate in instructional support, orientation sessions and other activities. The Academy will lease a copier and purchase a server and computers for the school site and office. The budget includes general liability insurance and licenses for software.

- **Provide a detailed narrative description of all revenue sources other than SEG funding, to include any federal, state, or private funds and/or grants.**

The Academy will apply for a federal stimulus grant and a charter school start-up grant. Federal stimulus money will be used to purchase technology and materials that will used by the students for their learning. The Academy will apply for Federal charter school grants in excess of 1.2 million dollars. As a conservative estimate, the Academy projects receipt of approximately $750,000 for a planning year (which will be paid over three years).

The Academy will apply for private and state grants, as appropriate. The Academy recognizes that most state and private grants are dependent on the type of students enrolled in the Academy and, therefore, we are not planning on receiving any discretionary or competitive grant funds to achieve financial goals (except for the federal charter school start-up grant). The Academy will seek grant funds to support activities and services above and beyond the primary instructional program.

- **Provide a detailed narrative description of the expenditure assumptions for these other revenue sources.**

Among the expenditures that the federal charter school start-up grant funds will be used for during the planning year are:
    - Purchase of equipment, furniture and supplies for the facility
    - Purchase of equipment and licenses for instructional technology

- Hire a head administrator for part of the year (3 months or as otherwise permitted by NM PED) to prepare to open the school.
- Consulting fees

Among the expenditures that the federal charter school start-up grant funds will be used for during the first and second years of operation are:
- Purchase of additional equipment for instructional technology
- Provide teacher pre-service training and monthly teacher professional development
- Purchase assistive technology and instructional tools/supplies for special education students
- Purchase test preparation resources including Study Island and Scantron
- Contract for an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the Academy's instructional program

B. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

This section contains the Academy's proposed plan for financial management systems, an adequate plan for budget allocations and audit obligations, and internal control provisions for meeting minimum insurance requirements. These internal control provisions will safeguard assets, segregate payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information and ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state statues, regulations and rules relative to fiscal procedures.

- **Provide a detailed plan indicating how the charter school will manage its fiscal responsibilities.**

The Academy Administration, under the guidance of the Academy Governing Board, will be accountable for compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to public schools.

Academy Governing Board will adopt the State of New Mexico Procurement Code [13.1.21.et seq. NMSA – New Mexico Administrative Code] as our policy for all procurements.

Academy will utilize the Operations Manager, who will be adept at using financial software to manage fiscal responsibilities, safeguard assets, provide reliable financial information, and promote operational efficiency that will ensure compliance with all regulatory guidelines. The Academy Operations Manager and the Head Administrator will be responsible for planning, preparing and presenting an annual school budget to the Governing Board for adoption that will follow all the procedural and maintenance requirements pursuant to 6.20.2.8 NMAC, 6.20.2.9 NMAC, and 6.20.2.10 NMAC. Operations Manager will provide fiscal reports which will include revenue, expenditures and a balance sheet for each quarter.

The Academy Governing Board will establish a Finance Committee made up of knowledgeable financial advisors. The Finance Committee will work closely with the Operations Manager to meet the fiscal needs of Academy and ensure awareness and compliance with all the rules and regulations as outlined in 2.40.2 and 6.20.2 NMAC.

The Governing Board, the Finance Committee, the Administration and the Operations Manager will take all the necessary steps required to 1) ensure that all assets are safeguarded against loss and unauthorized use, 2) to ensure that Academy will provide reliable financial information, 3) to ensure the efficient operations, and 4) to ensure that compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and procedures of the Public Education Department. All current expenditures will be funded from current revenues. Academy will not postpone expenditures or accrue revenues so as to avoid paying for current expenditures at the expense of meeting a subsequent year's expenses. The assignment of fiscal duties to staff members in Academy will be made with the intent of limiting their ability to cause and conceal errors, irregularities and illegalities.

In meeting the responsibilities of office, the Academy Operations Manager will use a modified accrual-basis accounting program to keep records for all school finances. This program will keep records available for timely access and reporting. Also, the Operations Manager will review all purchase orders before they are issued for sufficiency of funds; prepare monthly financial reports; report the status of the budget monthly; present and track proposed Budget Adjustment Requests (BAR); maintain a positive balance by object code for all funds; and keep the Governing Board, the Finance Committee, and the Administration of the availability of funds for budgeting purposes. The Academy Operations Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all of the accounting systems comply with GAAP. Quarterly fiscal operations and academic reports will use STARS and UCA for state reporting.

Pursuant to 6.20.2.18 NMAC, the Governing Body will establish written payroll policies and procedures which comply with state and federal regulations and provide strict internal controls, close supervision and financial controls in accordance with GAAP. The Operations Manager will use a payroll system for the calculation of wages, employee benefits and the processing of payroll on a semi-monthly basis for all Academy employees. Academy will maintain and have available for inspection the following records related to payroll: employment contracts, payroll action forms, federal and state withholding records, pay deduction authorizations, pay change notices, Educational Retirement Act records and direct deposit authorizations.

All payroll and employee information is confidential and will be safeguarded by policies and procedures implemented by the Academy Governing Body in accordance with the Public Records Act, Section 14.3.1 et seq. NMSA 1978.

For heightened accountability, both the Academy Administrative Assistant and the Academy Operations Manager will be trained on the Operating Budget Management System (OBMS) for the purpose of providing assurance that the information is in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and procedures for the PED.

The Governing Board will establish written inventory control policies and procedures which comply with state and federal regulations and provide strict internal controls, close supervision and financial controls in accordance with GAAP. The Operations Manager will use an automated inventory control system for the management, tracking and control of assets.

- **Provide a description of the school's internal control procedures that it will utilize to safeguard assets, segregate its payroll and other check disbursement duties, provide reliable financial information, promote operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with all applicable federal statutes and regulations and state statutes and rules relative to fiscal procedures.**

Internal controls are the methods and procedures used to provide reasonable assurance to:

Safeguard Assets

In accordance with NM Statute 6.20.2 and Federal OMB Circular A -102, all state, federal, and other monies received by Academy will be deposited in Academy accounts within 24 hours or one banking day of receipt at an authorized banking institution per state regulations. The school shall account for public money placed in interest bearing deposits in accordance with Sections 22-8-40© through (G), NMSA 1978; Section 6-10-17, NMSA 1978; Section 6-10-31, NMSA 1978,and other federal and state laws applicable to the investment of public school money.

As required by law, Academy will take responsibility for acquiring all necessary federal, state, and local tax and employer identification numbers to establish itself as a public school in the state of New Mexico. All bank accounts shall be established to require multiple signatures on checks or other forms of disbursement.

Academy Governing Board understands and will abide by the prohibition in the 1999 Charter Schools Act against entering into any contractual arrangement that exceeds one year in length except as permitted by following acceptable Procurement Code procedures..

Financial Business Operations

The Academy will operate in accordance with state law pertaining to fiscal solvency and responsibility. This will include but not be limited to establishing a control system pursuant to NM State laws. Charter schools are funded through the state, under the School Finance Act. Academy will reserve two percent of the funding for administration of the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) finances. Tuition cannot be charged. Charter schools are responsible for formulating their own budgets in accordance with state audit guidelines. The revenue stream for the school will include:

1. State Equalization Guarantee Formula Based on 40, 80, 120 Day Count (2% of this goes to PED);
2. Other State and Federal Monies (e.g.; State and Federal Stimulus Funds, Instructional Materials Funding, Title II Professional Development monies, etc.);
3. Corporate and Not-For-Profit Grants;
4. Contributions from Private and Non-Profit Entities.

Cash Management

Appropriate cash management practices will be developed and used to ensure that all monies are adequately protected against loss or theft. These practices shall include but are not limited to:

- Monthly reconciliations of all cash accounts, including bank accounts, which are part of the responsibility of the Operations Manager or the contract provider of fiscal management.
- Periodic internal audits will be made on all cash accounts. The frequency of these audits will be determined, but should not be less than twice each year.
- The separation of accountabilities and duties ensures sound fiscal control practices to protect from fraud by requiring that no person shall initiate and approve the same transaction in any circumstance.

Accounting Basis

Academy financial records shall be maintained using a modified accrual basis of accounting with the capacity to convert financial statements and other financial reports, as needed, to a cash basis.

Compliance with GASB 14

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), Statement No. 14, "The Financial Reporting Entity" (Issued 6/91), Academy will follow the standards defined for a financial reporting entity based on its site-based financial accountability as set forth in the 1999 Charter Schools Act. This shall apply to all financial reporting to ensure that the nature and significance of Academy's relationship with the PED is in no way misleading or incomplete.

Compliance with Budgeting and Reporting Requirements of the PED

Academy will utilize a financial system that will have an off-site backup of files to implement the required chart of accounts and to meet all budget submissions and reporting deadlines, including quarterly reports and end of the year reporting.

Compliance with the Anti-Donation Clause

Academy will comply with the Anti-donation clause of the State Constitution which states: neither the "state nor any county, school district or municipality, except as otherwise provided in the New Mexico Constitution (Article IX, Section 14), shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit or make any donation to or in aid of any person, association or public or private corporation."

Disbursement Process

Disbursements at Academy shall be made as defined and scheduled by the Academy Governance Board. In no instance shall the party initiating a request for disbursement be the same party who approves that disbursement. Nor shall the party approving the disbursement be the same party who distributes the payment. This separation of accountabilities shall be enforced to protect Academy from any fraudulent disbursement of monies.

Payroll Procedures

Academy Governance Board will determine the policy and payment schedule for all employee compensation. Academy payroll payments will be made in the manner defined in policy in accordance with the appropriate separation of duties and approval of payroll time records to ensure that employees are paid only for services rendered. Time records will be maintained for all Academy employees.

Non-Payroll Disbursements

Academy shall be responsible for paying all approved and authorized school-related bills in accordance with school policy prescribed in the *1999 Charter Schools Act.*

Provide reliable financial information.

Academy agrees to maintain appropriate financial records in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. Academy also agrees to contract for an independent, outside audit by a certified public accountant of its financial and administrative operations on an annual basis. The results of the audit shall be provided to the PED in written form and shall be published and posted as required by law.

Fiscal Management Compliance Plan

SEG and most other revenues will flow from the State of New Mexico directly to Academy; however, the PED will retain 2% of the SEG for administrative expenses. Academy will work collaboratively with the PED to assure timely reporting and other financial/fiscal processes. In accordance with the *1999 Charter Schools Act* and good

business practices, Academy will be held accountable for its fiscal performance. When classes begin in 2010, a revised budget will be prepared and submitted to the PED, based on the actual, rather than estimated or projected enrollment numbers for student population.

Promote operational efficiency

Academy will be responsible for its operations within the limitations of funding provided by the State of New Mexico and other revenues derived by the school consistent with State law. The school shall have authority to independently exercise, in accordance with federal and state law, the following:

1. Contract for goods and services;
2. Budget preparation;
3. Personnel selection and determination of compensation;
4. Evaluation of personnel performance;
5. Payroll functions
6. Procurement of insurance;
7. Lease of facilities for school purposes;
8. Purchase or lease of furniture and equipment;
9. Procurement of instructional materials and supplies; and
10. Acceptance of gifts, donations or grants consistent with law.
11. Ensure financial systems are secure and backed up as needed.

The Academy will comply with all applicable federal statutes and regulations and state statutes and rules relative to fiscal procedures and policy. Academy will furnish the PED copies of all policies or procedures that may be developed with regard to any operational or educational program, upon adoption by the Governance Council. Academy policies and procedures will be provided to PED when adopted. Any policy and procedure not currently developed, will follow the requirements of PED and will be submitted for approval to the PED prior to implementation

- **Provide a description of the manner in which the annual audit of the financial operations of the charter school is to be conducted.**

  The Board of Finance will annually contract for auditing services through a formal procurement process and in compliance with the state's audit procedures. The Head Administrator will seek and prepare three bids for the Board to consider. A formal engagement letter will be issued by the auditor and reviewed by appropriate state regulators.

  The Board of Finance will receive, review and approve the auditor's manager letter and audited financial statements on an annual basis.

  The Board of Finance and Head Administrator will annually review internal controls and other processes based on the audit findings. The Board of Finance and Head

Administrator will make recommendations for policy and/or procedural changes based on audit findings.

The computer that contains the accounting program and file is password protected. In addition, a backup copy of this file is made daily. Access to the accounting program can be audited via remote log-in records.

In the event that the PED selects the auditor, because the school will be audited as a component unit of the NMPED, the charter school will ensure that all reports and documentation are made available in a timely manner when notified of the audit dates. Moreover, the Academy will include an annual amount in its budget to pay for its portion of the budget in consultation with the NMPED.

A. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- **Describe how the school will be governed.**

  Sandia Academy will be governed by a governing body of at least five members according to the terms of the charter. No member of the governing body shall serve on the governing body of another charter school. The school may contract with a third party for the use of a facility; its operation and maintenance; and the provision of any service or activity that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in the charter.

- **Provide an organizational chart for the school and a narrative description of the chart that explains the proposed school site-based personnel reporting structure to the governing body <u>and</u> the relationship of the governing body to the school's leader and administration.**

  Please refer to the organization chart on the following page of the application. The Governing Body will have the ultimate responsibility for all of the operations and the budget of the Academy. The Governing Body will have the responsibility and authority to contract with third parties for curriculum, financial management services, human resource services, technology services, facilities, educational related services, and other services. The Governing Body will have direct oversight of the curriculum, financial management, and facilities' third party contracts.

  The Governing Body of the Academy will hire the Head Administrator of the school who will report to the Governing Body. The Head Administrator of the charter school shall employ, fix the salaries of, assign, terminate and discharge all employees of the charter school. All employees shall ultimately report to the Head Administrator. The Head Administrator will have daily responsibility for oversight of the human resource services', technology services', educational related services', and

other third party contracts. The Head Administrator will be responsible for reporting on that oversight to the Governing Body on a regular basis.

The Head Administrator will oversee the Special Education Coordinator. The Special Education Coordinator will ensure that the school is compliant with Special Education requirements and that students with IEPs are receiving appropriate ancillary services. The Operations Manager will oversee the Administrative Assistant/Registrar.

The Elementary and Middle School staff will report to the Head Administrator who will supervise them. The Head Administrator will coordinate communication and project assignment for elementary and middle school teachers.

The High School Coordinator reports to the Head Administrator and supervises the high school teaching staff. He will serve as a liaison between high school teachers and the Head Administrator and coordinate communication and project assignment for high school teachers.

Academy administrative staff will manage the Academy, handling all day-to-day academic, operational, and management issues. They will have leadership experience as school Head Administrators or school leaders.   Staff will be expected to demonstrate expertise in curriculum, instructional assessment, finance, facilities, business management, governance and administration. The Academy administrative staff will be structured based on the Academy's education program and projected enrollment.

SANDIA ACADEMY PROPOSED ORGANIZATION CHART
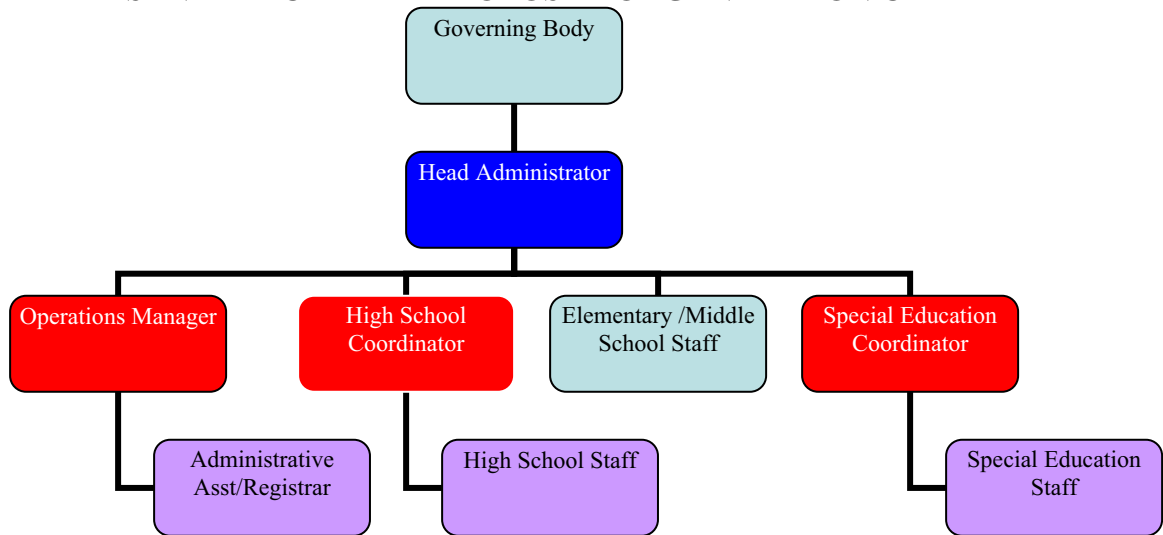
- **Delineate the roles and responsibilities of parent councils, advisory committees, and/or community groups in relation to the governing body.**

Direct parental and community member involvement is fundamental to the success of Sandia Academy.

- Parents and community members can hold a direct leadership position and influence the management of the school by serving on the Academy Board. The Board sets policy and provides governance and oversight on the Academy's academic, extracurricular, finance, personnel, daily operations, and legal matters.

- Parents who are not members of the Board are actively encouraged to attend Board and other Academy meetings and to participate on ad-hoc committees appointed to address specific issues.

- Sandia Academy will organize a Parent Advisory Group. The Parent Advisory Group is parent-driven and is recognized as the official voice of the Academy's parents. The group serves as a direct communication link between Academy families and the school and is a resource for parents, both as a source of conveying school information to families as well as relaying parental suggestions to school administration.

- The Academy will create an advisory "School Council" as required by 22-5-16 NMSA 1978 to assist the school Head Administrator with school-based decision-making and to involve parents in their children's education. School council membership shall reflect an equitable balance between school employees and parents and community members. At least one community member shall represent the business community, if possible. The school Head Administrator may serve as chairman. The school Head Administrator shall be an active member of the school council. The council will:

  o work with the school Head Administrator and give advice, consistent with state and school district rules and policies, on policies relating to instructional issues and curricula and on the public school's proposed and actual budgets;

  o develop creative ways to involve parents in the schools;

  o where appropriate, coordinate with any existing work force development boards or vocational education advisory councils to connect students and school academic programs to business resources and opportunities; and

  o serve as the champion for students in building community support for schools and encouraging greater community participation in the public schools.

  o Teachers will initiate regular conferences and conversations with parents about their child's progress and also about parents' needs and concerns about the operation of the school. Parents are free to contact

teachers, specialists, and other parents to solve problems, give feedback, or pass on ideas and insights to the school community.

o The Academy website will have a moderated Academy online community discussion board to facilitate a constructive and interactive communication process.

o Parents will help us to continuously evaluate the operation and governance of the school both online and offline. The Academy will survey parents online annually to determine their satisfaction with their overall experience. Criteria of the survey will include the curriculum, instruction, *Online School System*, administration, support, quality and delivery of materials, working with the lessons, student progress, student attitude towards learning, communication, and interaction with other Academy students and parents. Parents may supply critiques and/or endorsements regarding their experience at the Academy.

o Throughout the school year, the Head Administrator, other administrators, and teachers will account for contributions that parents and community members have made to the operations and governance of the school and communicate this to the Board and the school community through the school website, in print reports and in face-to-face meetings. New opportunities for parents and community members to contribute will always be considered.

- **Provide policies and procedures by which the governing body will operate in compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, including the open meetings act.**

A proposed template for the school's bylaws covering governance policies and procedures is attached as **Appendix 14**. The charter school will operate in compliance with its bylaws, policies adopted by the Governing Body, and with all federal and state laws applicable to public charter schools, including without limitation:

(1) Inspection of Public Records Act, Sections 14-2-1 et seq. NMSA 1978 and applicable regulations concerning public records;

(2) Open Meetings Act; Sections 10-15-1, et seq. NMSA 1978;

(3) All state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools, including those health and safety codes relating to educational building occupancy;

(4) All state and federal laws applicable to providing special education services;

(5) All provisions of state law applicable to conflicts of interest including the New Mexico Procurement Code, Sections 1-1-128, et seq. NMSA 1978; Prohibited Sales Act, Section 22-21-1 et seq. NMSA 1978 and federal regulations 34 CFR 75.525 and 80.36;

(6) Criminal Background checks in accordance with Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978;

(7) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act as amended;

(8) The New Mexico Public School Code; Chapter 22 NMSA 1978, including the Charter Schools Act, 22-89B-1, et seq. NMSA 1978; and

(9) The Statewide Cyber Academy Act.

- **Policies and procedures will address:**

  - **board powers and duties** (please also see **Appendix 14**);

    Board powers and duties will be consistent with those set forth in the Public School Code and, specifically, the New Mexico Charter Schools Act, NMSA 1978 22-8B-1 *et seq.* as amended. The Governing Body's bylaws will describe how the Governing Body will exercise its powers and duties. A draft set of bylaws is attached as **Appendix 14** which outlines the primary governance policies of the Academy's Governing Body. The bylaws will be drafted and adopted by the Governing Body during the Planning Year. The Governing Body's powers are as follows::

    1. Those powers as set forth in the Academy's bylaws that are not inconsistent with federal or state laws or constitutions, or as otherwise set forth in the Charter Schools Act, NMSA 1978 §§22-8B-1, et seq. which provides that the Academy:
    2. To take necessary measures to ensure that the charter school operates subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry or need for special education services;
    3. Shall be to govern the charter school in the manner set forth in the charter; provided that a governing body shall have at least five members; no member may serve on the governing body of another charter school;
    4. Shall be responsible for (a) its own operation, including preparation of a budget, subject to audits pursuant to the Audit Act [12-6-1 NMSA 1978]; (b) and contracting for services and personnel matters;

5.   May contract with a school district, a university or college, the state, another political subdivision of the state, the federal government or one of its agencies, a tribal government or any other third party for the use of a facility, its operation and maintenance and the provision of any service or activity that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in its charter.

6.   The Governing Body shall ensure that the facilities used by a charter school shall meet the standards required pursuant to Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978;

7.   May pay the costs of operation and maintenance of its facilities or may contract with the school district to provide facility operation and maintenance services;

8.   May acquire and dispose of property; provided that, upon termination of the charter, all assets of the locally chartered charter school shall revert to the local school board and all assets of the state-chartered charter school shall revert to the state, except that, if all or any portion of a state-chartered charter school facility is financed with the proceeds of general obligation bonds issued by a local school board, the facility shall revert to the local school board;

9.   May accept or reject any charitable gift, grant, devise or bequest; provided that no such gift, grant, devise or bequest shall be accepted if subject to any condition contrary to law or to the terms of the charter. The particular gift, grant, devise or bequest shall be considered an asset of the charter school to which it is given;

10. Shall comply with all state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools, including those health and safety codes relating to educational building occupancy;

11. Shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules related to providing special education services. Charter school students with disabilities and their parents retain all rights under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implementing state and federal rules.

12. Employ the Head Administrator of Academy

13. Delegate administrative and supervisory functions of the Head Administrator of the Academy when appropriate;

14. Approve the annual budget of anticipated income and expenditures, and direct the preparation of the annual financial audit report in connection with the New Mexico Public Education Department's annual audit;

15. Have the capacity to sue or be sued;

16. May contract for provision of financial management, food services, education related services or other services; and

17. Be responsible for its own operation, including preparation of the budget, subject to audits pursuant to the Audit Act.

- **the criteria and the process that will be used to select the school's head administrator;**

Prior to opening in the fall of 2010, the process to advertise for, select and employ the Head Administrator for the charter school will begin after the Public Education Commission has granted a written charter to the Academy. The Academy proposes to hire, and has budgeted in this application, for a Head Administrator. The Head Administrator will be recruited with advertisements in well-known educational trade publications such as Education Week, via online job recruitment sites such as Monster.com, and in local media throughout New Mexico. Resumes will be reviewed and sorted.

Administrators will be interviewed by the Governing Body. Reference checks and background checks will be completed on each candidate. Candidates must comply with all state laws requiring fingerprinting and other documentation. The Head Administrator will be hired by the Governing Body. Compensation level (salary and benefits) for the Head Administrator will be competitive with starting local salary and benefits. Employment agreements will be signed. Benefits will be secured. As a vacancy occurs in this position, the same recruitment, selection, and employment techniques will be used. The criteria for hiring a Head Administrator are listed in the Head Administrator's qualifications/job description in Section VII D.

- **budgeting and operation of the school; and**

The school's Operations Manager will insure that accurate budget reports are kept and that they will be presented to the Governing Body at their monthly meetings. Budget reports will include all revenue and expenditures. These monthly budget reports will be approved in an open Governing Body Meeting.

The President or Treasurer of the Governing Body and the Head Administrator will be the only individuals with signatory authority and will be responsible for authorizing all cash transactions. Such items in amounts of $5,000 or more must be signed or authorized by two of these individuals. The person responsible for school finance will record all transactions in the General Ledger. The Treasurer or the President of the Governing Body will have the sole authority for review, approval and payment of all contract invoices.

Yearly independent annual audits will be completed to insure the accuracy of accounting procedures. The Academy's auditor will be approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department prior to doing the audit and will be paid by the Academy. The audit will be prepared in accordance with the Audit Act [12-6-1 NMSA 1978] and auditing standards and rules issued by the state auditor. The annual audit will be forwarded to the state auditor and others designated in the charter agreement.

The Head Administrator will perform an entire programmatic review of the Academy annually, including all the terms of the charter agreement and the academic performance of the school's students. This review will be inclusive of all compliance reporting mandated by the Governing Body, Public Education Commission, and Public Education Department. The Academy will report on the performance of the school and its students.

- **how decisions will be made.**

The proposed Academy Organization Chart above illustrates the lines of decision making in the school. Academy administrative staff will manage the Academy, handling all day-to-day academic, operational, and management issues. Teachers and administrative and support staff report to the Head Administrator who, in turn, as necessary, requests decisions to be made by the Academy Governing Body. The Governing Body and the Head Administrator share the responsibilities for overseeing third party contracts for services.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- **Provide a description of the responsibilities and obligations of the governing body as a whole, individual members, and officers of the governing body.**

The Governing Board will assume ultimate responsibility for all of the operations and the budget of the Academy. The responsibilities and obligations of the governing body as a whole, individual members, and officers of the governing body will be contained in the Board By Laws which will be written and adopted in the Planning Year. The Governing Board of Sandia Academy requests to be designated as a board of finance and is committed to becoming qualified as a board of finance.

Governance. The Academy shall be governed by the Academy Governing Body ("Governing Body") and managed by its Head Administrator pursuant to the school's charter and duly adopted bylaws. The Governing Body will be responsible for adopting policy, overseeing the management of the school and ensuring financial compliance and responsibility. In addition, the Governing Body will ensure that the mission and goals of the charter are carried out by engaging in strategic planning. The Governing Body will not be involved in the daily operations of the school, but will hire a Head Administrator who the Governing Body will evaluate at least annually. The Governing Body will make sure that the Head Administrator manages the Academy in compliance with the Charter Schools Act and all state and federal laws and regulations.

Membership. The Governing Body will have a five-member governing body at a minimum. After the Academy's application is approved, the original Governing Body will adopt bylaws setting the maximum number and composition of the Governing Body. The original Governing Body as defined in this application will

serve as the five-member Board of Finance for the planning year and at least the first year of operation. If a parent or other voting members are added to the Governing Body, the new members must qualify to serve as a member of a Board or Finance or be disqualified to serve.

Terms. Governing Body members' terms will be staggered to ensure continuity in the institutional memory. Terms may be either two or three years, but the Governing Body will make a final decision regarding term lengths as part of its bylaws will address assignment of term lengths to each position.

Nominating. The Governing Body will develop a policy to ensure that membership to the Governing Body will include a broad range of expertise, including backgrounds in education, science and related fields, public school and private finance, law, community issues and such other areas that the Governing Body deems relevant to serve the best interest of the school. The Governing Body will notify the school's community and the community at large of positions opening on the school's governing body as well as committees.

Conduct. The Body's bylaws will address conduct of its members. Members will be required to sign conflict of interest disclosure statements, be familiar with their responsibilities as a member in the context of open meetings and clearly understand their ethical and fiduciary obligations to the school. Body members will participate in NMPED training requirements and understand the importance of self-education in order to effectively participate on a charter school governing body.

Bylaws. The Governing Body will adopt bylaws, policies and procedures for operating once the charter has been approved and a charter school governing body is created thereby. The bylaws will address the roles of the Governing Body's officers and members, authority and duty, committees, and other functions of the Governing Body in relation to a public charter school. In addition, the bylaws will address how and when members may be removed for unacceptable or inappropriate conduct such as; failing to meet their commitments to attend meetings, using the position to gain financially, failing to disclose conflicts, taking positions that are not aligned with school's mission, vision, philosophy, goals and objectives. Please see Sample Governing Board Bylaws in **Appendix 14.**

Meetings. The Governing Body will meet at least once each month to hear reports, to consider and adopt policies, to act on committee recommendations and to consider requests and concerns from parents, students, teachers and the public. A quorum is defined as three attendees when there are five members on the Governing Body. The bylaws will address quorum numbers for the eventuality of more than five members. A majority vote will constitute action by the Governing Body. The Governing Body will follow the requirements of the Open Meetings Act when holding its meetings; e.g., for purpose of notice, agendas, conduct of the meeting, and preparing the minutes in a timely manner. The absence of a quorum at Governing Body meetings will eliminate the ability to take action. In addition, the Governing Body and the

school will also follow the Inspection of Records Act for any request of policies or public documents.

Relationship to PED. The Academy will be considered a Local Educational Agency (LEA) which is overseen by the New Mexico PED for general education and special education purposes

- **List each of the members of the school's governing body.**

  There will be at least five members of the Academy governing body. Currently, prospective members include:

  James Arellanes

  Ralph Arellanes

  Traci Filiss

  Jessica I. Martinez

  Mellani Murphy

  Evie Shaefer

- **Provide a brief description of the qualifications of each governing body member.**

  James Arellanes

  James Arellanes was born and raised in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He attended West Las Vegas Schools and graduated from West Las Vegas High School in 1982. Mr. Arellanes received his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from New Mexico State University in 1988 and completed his Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering at the University of New Mexico in 1993. Mr. Arellanes has worked as an engineer for the federal government nearly 23 years in the nuclear, space and radio frequency environments. He has dealt with various high end hardware and software in performing his duties as an engineer, analyst, project leader and project officer.

  Ralph Arellanes

  Ralph Arellanes was born and raised in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Mr. Arellanes attended West Las Vegas Schools and graduated from West Las Vegas High School in 1980. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting and Finance from New Mexico Highlands University in 1985. Mr. Arellanes went on to complete a Master of Business Administration at New Mexico Highlands University in 1986 with an emphasis on Management, Accounting and Finance. He completed his MBA

with a 3.8 GPA. Mr. Arellanes has worked for the federal government for 25 years in the fields of accounting, finance and business. Mr. Arellanes has worked as an Auditor, Business Manager, Revenue Agent, Cost Analyst and Program Analyst for the Federal government.

Traci Filiss

Ms. Filiss is the founder of the Taos Academy. The Taos Academy is a hybrid charter school (part distance learning and part onsite instruction) that will open its doors this coming fall.   Ms. Filiss is a distance learning consultant who holds a teaching License; an Elementary certification K-8 - Highly Qualified in Science and Technology; a Level 3 Instructional Leader New Mexico Teacher License; a Secondary certification; and Science and Technology Endorsements. She received her Education Specialist Certification: Educational Leadership from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Ms. Filiss received a Masters in Education Degree in Curriculum, Design and Instruction in Instructional Technology from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology with a Business minor from Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, North Carolina. As a director and coordinator of several hybrid school programs in New Mexico, including being a consultant on the IDEAL-NM's original business proposal for the State Cyber Academy, Ms. Filiss understands the importance of developing quality distance learning programs for students in grades Kindergarten to 12.

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Jessica I. Martinez

Jessica I. Martinez was born in Anaheim, California. She graduated from Mayfield High School in Las Cruces, New Mexico where she was the Student Body President and an honor student. She is the National Youth President of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). LULAC is the oldest and largest Latino membership organization. She is a member of LULAC Youth Council 53. She is a past President of that Council and previously held the position of New Mexico Youth State Director. She is currently attending the University of New Mexico where she is majoring in Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations and a minor in Latin American Studies. She plans to attend Law School with aspirations to some day be the New Mexico Attorney General or a member of the U.S. Senate representing New Mexico.

Mellani Murphy

Mellani Murphy studied vocal performance and ballroom dance at Brigham Young University from 1997-2000 where she was the President for the local Church Women's Organization. While studying at the University, she also worked in scheduling and assisted in the Public Relations efforts of the Family Studies Center, as well as assisting in editing a large research book being prepped for publication. During the summer of 1998, she created marketing brochures and revised employee training manuals for an organic chemical company, Triad. In 2000, she worked for

the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center as the Administrative Assistant for the Newborn Intensive Care Unit, where she worked with department heads in hospital administration. While there, she created the hiring criteria and process for new applicants. Currently she is an Executive Team Leader with the largest direct selling telecommunications provider. Mellani also co-owns and manages both a real estate investment company and a real estate brokerage, Consider It Sold Realty, in Albuquerque.

Evie Shaefer

Evie M. Shaefer is a wife and new mother. She holds a dual nationality from Belgium and the United States. She has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. As an Air Force dependent, she has attended U.S. schools as well as foreign institutions. Evie was brought up aware of the cultural differences and divides throughout the world. Her parents instilled the importance of education in the lives of their family. She earned a dual major for her Bachelor of Business Administration in Management Information Systems and International Business. Evie has also earned a Master in Science in Administrative Studies with a concentration in Multinational Commerce from Boston University. She has acquired a Finance Diploma and a Certificate in International Relations. Evie is currently working toward her Doctorate in Public Policy and Administration in Public Management and Leadership with a concentration on Education. Evie understands the importance of family and the important role of education in improving today's society.

- **Describe the plans for governing body member recruitment and selection, including the orientation process for new members and ongoing professional development.**

The Governing Body will be comprised of at least five individuals. New members will be recruited by posting the open positions on the Academy website and by advertising in newspapers serving the population across the state of New Mexico. Referrals will also be accepted. Interested persons will submit their names and applications which will be reviewed by the members of the Governing Body. Members of the Governing Body will be elected by a majority vote of the members then in office.

The Academy Governing Body may elect any person to be a member who, at its discretion, it believes will serve the interests of the school faithfully and effectively. It is the Governing Body's goal that its members will represent a broad diversity of expertise and interests including teachers, parents, community members and business leaders. The current prospective board members have track records which demonstrate successful performance in education, business, and commitment to the State of New Mexico and its communities.

Board member development will be a priority of the Sandia Academy Board. In recruiting future board members, individuals with demonstrated expertise in the areas of academic, administrative, fiscal and operational accountability will be sought. Board member development will focus on developing these skills as they apply to the Academy. The Governing Body will adopt a comprehensive policy manual to be followed by board members as they govern and oversee the Academy. Policies included in the manual will address board roles and responsibilities (including fundraising), expectations, ethics, professional development, strategic planning, policymaking, budgeting, compliance, academic accountability, financial oversight and accountability, public relations, and board evaluation.

Governing Body skills will be developed continuously and comprehensively. Trainings will include attendance at mandatory NMPED governing body training for charter schools; school board and charter school conferences; curriculum training; school funding training; team-building sessions; school mission and vision reviews; creation of Governing Body and officer job descriptions; leadership training; new Governing Body member orientation; networking; and committee and task force assignments.

- **Explain the nature and extent of staff, families, and the community involvement in the governance of the school, and how they will be notified of the opportunity to participate in the school governance.**

  As mentioned previously, there are several ways for staff, families and the community to be involved in the governance of the school:

  - Parents and community members can hold a direct leadership position and influence the management of the school by serving on the Academy Board.

  - Parents who are not members of the Board are actively encouraged to attend Board and other Academy meetings and to participate on ad-hoc committees appointed to address specific issues.

  - Sandia Academy will organize a Parent Advisory Group. The Parent Advisory Group is parent-driven and is recognized as the official voice of the Academy's parents. The group serves as a direct communication link between Academy families and the school and is a resource for parents, both as a source of conveying school information to families as well as relaying parental suggestions to school administration.

  - The Academy will create an advisory "School Council" as required by 22-5-16 NMSA 1978 to assist the school Head Administrator with school-based decision-making and to involve parents in their children's education. School council membership shall reflect an equitable balance between school employees and parents and community members. At least one community member shall represent the business community, if possible. The school Head

Administrator may serve as chairman. The school Head Administrator shall be an active member of the school council.   The council will:

- work with the school Head Administrator and give advice, consistent with state and school district rules and policies, on policies relating to instructional issues and curricula and on the public school's proposed and actual budgets;

- develop creative ways to involve parents in the schools;

- where appropriate, coordinate with any existing work force development boards or vocational education advisory councils to connect students and school academic programs to business resources and opportunities; and

- serve as the champion for students in building community support for schools and encouraging greater community participation in the public schools.

- Teachers will initiate regular conferences and conversations with parents about their child's progress and also about parents' needs and concerns about the operation of the school. Parents are free to contact teachers, specialists, and other parents to solve problems, give feedback, or pass on ideas and insights to the school community.

- The Academy website will have a moderated Academy online community discussion board to facilitate a constructive and interactive communication process.

- Parents will help us to continuously evaluate the operation and governance of the school both online and offline. The Academy will survey parents online annually to determine their satisfaction with their overall experience. Criteria of the survey will include the curriculum, instruction, *Online School System*, administration, support, quality and delivery of materials, working with the lessons, student progress, student attitude towards learning, communication, and interaction with other Academy students and parents. Parents may supply critiques and/or endorsements regarding their experience at the Academy.

- Throughout the school year, the Head Administrator, other administrators, and teachers will account for contributions that parents and community members have made to the operations and governance of the school and communicate this to the Board and the school community through the school website, in print reports and in face-to-

face meetings. New opportunities for parents and community members to contribute will always be considered.

C. PARTNERSHIPS (optional)

IF the school has identified a partner organization that is essential to the existence of the charter school, its governance, key instructional, and/or management functions, provide the following information:

- **Name of the partner organization.**
- **Name of the contact person at the partner organization and that person's full contact information.**
- **A description of the nature and purpose of the school's partnership with the organization.**
- **An explanation of how the partner organization will be involved in the governance of the school, if applicable.**
- **Evidence (in the form of a letter of support or intent to partner) that the school has a formal partnership agreement with the partner organization.**

Sandia Academy will not operate with a partner organization, however, the applicant group for the proposed charter school is collaborating with another applicant group (for Senator Dennis Chavez Academy) for the purposes of sharing information during the application process as well as sharing best practices when the schools are in operation. Sandia Academy has strong support in the community and state as evidenced by the letters of support and petitions which are included in this application as **Appendix 15**.

D. SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Based on the organizational chart provided under subsection *A. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE* above, describe the site-based management structure at the school. Include job descriptions that identify key roles, responsibilities and accountability for each position listed on the organizational chart.**

Governing Body

The members of the Academy Governing Body will have several roles and responsibilities including to:
- Govern all aspects of school operation
- Protect the legal interests of the Academy
- Determine and guide the school vision/mission
- Adopt Governing Body policy and bylaws
- Demonstrate sound legal and ethical practices and policies
- Manage liabilities wisely
- Define operational school policy
- Oversee the administrative staff's implementation of procedures consistent with those policies

- Encourage positive external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students
- Hire the Head Administrator
- Approve volunteers
- Enter into and oversee third party contracts
- Practice strategic planning
- Ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively, including overseeing school finances and purchases
- Comply with local, state, and federal reporting requirements
- Assess the Academy's academic and operational performance

Administrative Staff

The Head Administrator will be employed by the Governance Board. The Head Administrator will be responsible for the Academy's operations, will oversee the staff that that will manage the school, and will handle the academic and supervisory issues. The Head Administrator will be experienced leader with demonstrated expertise in curriculum, instruction, assessment, finance, facilities, business management, governance and administration. The Head Administrator will supervise an administrative staff that will be structured based on the school's education program and projected enrollment.

Head Administrator

Major responsibilities include:
- Act as chief administrative officer
- Employ, fix the salaries of, assign, terminate, and discharge all employees of the charter school
- Act as chief liaison to the school governing body
- Responsible for implementation of the school Mission, Vision, Strategic planning
- Oversee academic and operational aspects of the school
- Manage legal issues
- Oversee school marketing, enrollment and community relations
- Requires all students to participate in required assessments
- Oversee staff orientations
- Work with third party contractors to ensure that processes and communication between the school and the contractors are in place
- Implement the school's policies and oversee the writing of its handbooks and manuals
- Responsible for ensuring that school compliance and reporting requirements are met in an accurate and timely manner (including school report cards and all state and federal reports)

- Ensure that the school is complying with local, state, and federal laws regarding special education
- Prepare and oversee annual budget
- Understand the state Chart of Accounts
- Promote the school and its interests with political, education, and civic leaders across the state
- Develop and maintain relationships with districts, education stakeholders, and the state
- Organize and lead student recruitment events across the state

Requirements:
- Masters degree or equivalent work experience
- School administrator's license and related experience
- Experience with Local, State, and Federals laws and reporting
- Experience in a charter school environment preferred
- Great organizational and time management skills
- Flexible schedule
- Proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database preferred
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

Operations Manager

The Operations Manager reports to the Head Administrator.
Responsibilities include:
- Coordinate all operational aspects of the school
- Responsible for school compliance with local, state, and federal reporting requirements
- Manage development of school policies and procedures
- Manage school metrics
- Manage annual enrollment and re-enrollment efforts
- Manage annual state testing process and logistics
- Oversee the implementation of the school's truancy and attendance policies
- Responsible for school administration meetings (business-related topics)
- Work with Special Education Coordinator to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of students while complying with local, state, and federal laws regarding special education
- Act as point-of-contact on reporting issues
- Manage school data in state and school databases

Requirements for Operations Manager:
- Masters degree in Business or Education
- Minimum of five years work experience
- Great organizational and time management skills
- Flexible schedule
- Very proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database preferred
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

Desired:
- School administration experience
- Experience with Local, State, and Federals laws and reporting
- Experience in a charter school environment preferred

Special Education Coordinator

The Special Education Coordinator reports to the Head Administrator.

Responsibilities include:
- Develop and implement all special education procedures
- Recruit, train, supervise and evaluate special education teachers
- Create and maintain appropriate contacts with districts, county superintendents, and state special education leaders
- Develop and disseminate "best practices" for special education in the hybrid distance learning school setting
- Train all teachers in special education procedures, focusing on identification
- Implement the use of adaptive technology to meet the needs of our students
- Develop contacts with special education providers
- Oversee all special education reporting
- Design and implement a school-wide pre-referral process
- Oversee the development and maintenance of all IEPs
- Oversee all school, local, state, and federal compliance reporting
- Alert the Head Administrator of all changes in local, state, and/or federal special education practices and laws
- Work directly with parents and students (both regular and special education) where necessary
- Ensure that special education students are an integrated part of the school's fabric

- Work through the Head Administrator with the school's attorney on legal and compliance issues
- Travel, as required, to support students in the implementation of special education program
- Manage the special education budget

Requirements:
- Masters in Special Education, Highly Qualified, and holds a New Mexico teaching license
- Special Education administrative experience
- Experience with local, state and federal laws and reporting
- Prefer 8+ years of Special Education experience
- Great organizational and time management skills
- Proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

High School Coordinator

The High School Coordinator reports to the Head Administrator.

Major administrative responsibilities include:
- Serve as a liaison between high school teachers and the Head Administrator
- Coordinate communication and project assignment for high school teachers
- Implementation of high school mission, vision, strategic planning under the direction of the Head Administrator
- Coordinate all academic aspects of the high school
- Implement high school policies and oversee the writing of its handbooks
- Responsible for ensuring that high school compliance and reporting requirements are met in an accurate and timely manner
- Support the creation of a school community through newsletters, outings and discussion board postings
- Create general and formal student/teacher/parent communication mechanisms
- Recruit high school staff and students
- Contribute to budgeting and long term planning

Requirements
- Masters degree or equivalent work experience
- New Mexico Secondary Licensure

- Experience a school administration, an administrative credential and/or increasing responsibilities in school administration
- Proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database preferred
- Flexible schedule

Desired:
- Experience with distance learning
- Experience with Local, State, and Federals laws and reporting
- Experience in a charter school environment preferred

Administrative Assistant/Registrar

The Administrative Assistant/Registrar reports to the Operations Manager.

Major responsibilities include:
- Act as point-of-contact for questions regarding logistics and shipping
- Maintain office inventory
- Support administrators with local enrollment process
- Assist in school-wide mailings
- Manage all incoming calls and the telephone system as a whole
- Maintain accurate addresses, phone and email information in SAMS
- Serve as point of contact for school's general information email address
- Fulfill materials requests approved by the Operations Manager
- Greet guests who visit the Learning Center
- Assist with inventory and maintenance of all office equipment, supplies, and services
- Set up conference calls, meetings and office functions both on and off-site
- Assist in maintaining contact with families, teachers, and other community members
- Coordinate special events
- Create and maintain administrative calendars in Outlook, as needed
- Check-in, track faxes and distribute to site-based staff
- Coordinate all incoming/outgoing package processes on-site (Fed-Ex, UPS, courier service)
- Sort and distribute mail. Maintain stamps, mailing and package shipment supplies

- Keep all conference rooms, kitchen and general traffic areas clean and in order
- Distribute school-wide communications approved by administrative team
- Support administrators with local enrollment process
- Process student withdrawals
- Fulfill records requests for withdrawn students (within 5 days of receiving the request & remove file from active students and placed with the withdrawn student in regular file.)
- Request and track receipt of records for newly enrolled students.
- Maintain the school and state student-level database
- Maintain student cumulative files and other student records
- Establish secure access to student records
- Assist in the preparation of progress reports
- Assist in the preparation and maintenance of transcripts

Requirements:
- Great organizational and time management skills
- Working knowledge of digital phone systems (PBX or others)
- Professional experience using MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database
- Experience with inventory management preferred
- Strong written and verbal communication skills

Teachers

K-8 Teacher

The K-8 teacher reports to the Head Administrator. The K-8 teacher is a highly qualified and state licensed teacher responsible for delivering specific course content in both on line and traditional classroom environments.

Major responsibilities include:
- Maintains regular office hours and conducts instructional sessions both in the distance learning and traditional classroom settings
- Orients students to course and communicates course requirements
- Utilizes asynchronous and synchronous tools to supplement course content
- Collaborates in the implementation of IEP's and attends IEP meetings as requested
- Sets and enforces deadlines for student work

- Maintains regular contact with students and families with in-person meetings, via telephone, email, instant messenger, and web conferencing and submits communication log as required
- Grades student work and maintains grade book
- Communicates high expectations and shows an active interest in students' achievement
- Recommends promotion and retention
- Collaborates with peers
- Participates in staff development and educational team meetings
- Prepares students for state required testing
- Proctors testing
- In-state travel as needed to support student achievement or attend meetings
- Other duties as assigned by Head Administrator

Requirements
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience
- Licensure for K-8 and highly qualified teacher status
- Valid fingerprint clearance card
- Proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database preferred
- Flexible schedule – ability to travel

Desired:
- Experience with distance learning
- Experience in a customer service environment
- Experience with Local, State, and Federals laws and reporting
- Experience in a charter school environment preferred

High School Teacher

The high school teacher reports to the High School Coordinator. The high school teacher is a highly qualified and state licensed teacher responsible for delivering specific course content in both on line and traditional classroom environments.

Major responsibilities include:
- Maintains regular office hours and conducts instructional sessions both in the distance learning and traditional classroom settings
- Orients students to course and communicates course requirements
- Utilizes asynchronous and synchronous tools to supplement course content

- Collaborates in the implementation of IEP's and attends IEP meetings as requested
- Sets and enforces deadlines for student work
- Maintains regular contact with students and families with in-person meetings, via telephone, email, instant messenger, and web conferencing and submits communication log as required
- Grades student work and maintains grade book
- Communicates high expectations and shows an active interest in students achievement
- Recommends promotion and retention
- Collaborates with peers
- Participates in staff development and educational team meetings
- Prepares students for state required testing
- Proctors testing
- In-state travel as needed to support student achievement or attend meetings
- Other duties as assigned by High School Coordinator or Head Administrator

Requirements
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience
- Licensure for 9-12 and highly qualified teacher status in area of instruction
- Valid fingerprint clearance card
- Proficient in MS Excel, MSWord, and Outlook
- Experience using search engines (Internet) for research projects
- Experience using a student information system and/or other type of database preferred
- Flexible schedule

Desired:
- Experience with distance learning
- Experience in a customer service environment
- Experience with Local, State, and Federals laws and reporting
- Experience in a charter school environment preferred

- **Provide a staffing plan for each year of the first charter term, including the proposed pupil-teacher ratio to support the educational plan.**

The Academy staffing plan is structured to consider functional areas of school operation related to student enrollment. The functions are necessary for proper support of students, families and faculty. The number of specific positions will be a function of enrollment. The table below represents the plan for staffing for 2010-2015. Positions will be added in subsequent years as the need for expansion exists.

SANDIA ACADEMY STAFFING PLAN 2010-2015	
POSITION	**FULL TIME/PART TIME**
Head Administrator	FT (1.0)
Administrative Assistant/Registrar	PT (0.5)
Operations Manager	PT (0.5)
High School Coordinator	PT (0.5)
Special Education Coordinator	PT (0.5)
Teachers • Elementary • High School • Special Education • High School Advisor • High School Counselor	5 FT and 1 PT 2 FT and 5 PT 1 FT 1 PT 1 PT

When students in grades K-8 attend courses on site at the Learning Center, there will be a student to teacher ratio of 20 to 1. When students in grades 9-12 attend courses on site at the Learning Center there will be a student to teacher ratio of 25 to 1. These class loads are less than the maximum class loads allowed in the New Mexico School Personnel Act [22-10A-20 NMSA 1978]. Students will attend sessions at the Academy's Learning Center no less than one day per week. Those students needing additional assistance may attend more frequently. Attendance requirements may be modified based on a student's particular circumstances or needs. Distance learning classes will higher student to teacher ratios but will be of a size that teachers can effectively manage and students will successfully continue to learn.

E. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

- **Provide an explanation of the relationship that will exist between the school and its employees, including evidence that the terms and conditions of employment will be addressed with affected employees and their recognized representatives, if any.**

Sandia Academy will hire its own employees. The provisions of the School Personnel Act [22-10A-1 NMSA 1978] shall apply to such employees. The Head Administrator of the charter school shall employ, fix the salaries of, assign, terminate and discharge all employees of the charter school.

The Head Administrator shall not initially employ or approve the initial employment in any capacity of a person who is the spouse, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, brother, or brother-in-law of a member of the governing body or the Head Administrator. The Governing Board may waive the nepotism rule for family members of the Head Administrator.

The Academy's Governing Body and administration recognize that employees of the Academy may organize and request that management participate in collective bargaining. The Academy will participate in good faith and recognize its obligations pursuant to the New Mexico Public Employees Bargaining Act and the National Labor Relations Act.

- **Provide a description of the school's personnel policies and procedures that comply with all applicable federal statutes and regulations, including the School Personnel Act.**

Please see attached **Appendix 1.**

- **Provide proposed salary schedules for all employees that comply with the minimum salary requirements as identified in the School Personnel Act.**

Sandia Academy will comply with the New Mexico three-tiered system for teacher and administrator compensation identified in the School Personnel Act of the Public School Code. The Academy's Head Administrator will exercise discretion in initially setting salaries within each tier based on the unique years of experience, qualifications and competencies of each applicant. Administrative staff will begin employment at an annual rate consistent with each person's licensure and the minimum salary requirements identified in the School Personnel Act. Administrative employees will be eligible to receive an annual five percent merit-based increase based on the performance of the school and of individual administrators.

Draft salary schedules for teachers and administrative staff are included in this application as **Appendix 10.**

- **Describe the evaluation process for staff that will include evaluation of teachers by a licensed school administrator.**

The teacher evaluation process and tools will be refined during the planning year by the newly-hired Head Administrator and affirmed by the governing board. The evaluation and process and tools will conform to the Guidelines for New Mexico Annual Teacher Performance Evaluation.

Proposed Teacher Evaluation Processes

Purpose
1. To provide consistent expectations for all involved in K-12 teacher evaluation
2. To provide benchmarks for performance
3. To ensure time and opportunity for any needed intervention

Timeline and Expectations

JULY/AUGUST
- New teacher training occurs.
- Training will occur throughout the year.

AUGUST
- Lead teachers create a plan for mentoring teachers and expectations for performance.
- Monthly, beginning in August: Teachers are expected to attend Professional Development, follow norms school, complete all duties and responsibilities proactively, interact well with leadership team members, contribute as specialty teachers to the school, and participate in all standardized testing and data gathering. A variety of data and observation is collected and used in evaluation. It is understood that part of evaluation is subjective.

By October 15th
- All teachers will develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP) including the nine teacher competencies and using SMART goals
- Teachers will forward goals to Lead Teachers who in turn will review and then forward them to the Senior Leadership Team
- Teachers submit schedules and links to lead teacher and academic administrator for target and direct instruction sessions
- All lead teachers will review goals with teachers to be sure they are based on SMART goals, and address the needs of the school and forward them to the senior team.
- Observations of teacher classrooms occurs

NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER
- Five random calls or emails will be made to parents of teachers regarding performance in specific areas.
- If any area of concern arises, lead teacher will discuss area of concern with the teacher, and benchmarks for improvement will be developed. (The process of improvement could include another call to the parent within a short time frame, calls to other parents, observations or requiring artifacts for submission and review.)
- Administration may conduct at least one or more observation for teachers throughout the year.

JANUARY
- Lead teachers email Administration of any outstanding issues of concern, and/or needs for coaching or counseling facilitating the development of a collaborative support plan.