

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.

New Mexico Virtual Education Partners (NMVEP) is proposing a statewide public charter school to serve students in grades 6 through 12, expanding later to include grades 4 through 12. As a statewide school that provides online learning opportunities via the internet, the school will have an administrative office in Santa Fe but will not require a physical school location. NMVEP's primary partner in this endeavor is Kaplan Virtual Education, and we propose to name the school Kaplan Academy of New Mexico (KANM).

NMVEP was formed to bring the strengths of virtual education to the diverse New Mexico student population by creating one school that can meet multiple student needs and create one, connected learning community among students across the state with a focus on math, science and technology-based instruction.

Such a school will benefit students looking for more rigorous and advanced course work, particularly in the areas of math and science, through Honors and AP offerings; ELL and special education students who need individualized and targeted support; and students living in smaller districts where choice is limited with respect to differentiated courses and electives.

Most virtual schools aim for a flexible curriculum that does not mandate that all students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in identical ways or at identical times. Although this is an innovative departure from conventional school scheduling, too often the primary goals remain conventional, being largely focused on achieving "mastery" of standardized content as measured by conventional test scores.

The NMVEP founders seek to go beyond this baseline virtual model in two important ways. First, we seek to develop a program and a teaching corps that is ever mindful of opportunities to use instruction to help students develop the reasoning, evaluating and discerning skills that they will find useful across all the varying functions and roles they will play in their homes, schools and communities. Second, we seek to impart not only knowledge, skills and abilities, but also the confidence, creativity, and resourcefulness to deploy them adaptively in the 21st century.

Perhaps the most unique feature of this program is that students will receive intensive academic instruction and support from state-certified educators, who use analyses of student performance data to create individual learning paths for each student, and targeted interventions for struggling learners. This is a radical departure from other virtual models which are essentially home schooling, independent study, and/or heavily rely on parents for academic coaching.

Presently, the benefits of flexible, data-driven virtual schooling are not widely available to New Mexico students. These benefits include instruction that is more freely scheduled, flexibly paced, individually targeted, and closely monitored than a traditional "brick and mortar" classroom.

The Kaplan Academy of New Mexico can bring these benefits to a wider student population. KANM's educational program is designed to promote higher levels of engagement; motivate students toward self-directed learning and individual success; ensure content mastery; and balance the advantages of traditional and virtual classroom approaches. The school's founders believe that if given the opportunity via a stimulating, engaging, teacher-led educational program, many students will demonstrate an interest and aptitude for self-directed virtual learning.