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## OPTION FOR PARENTS CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION, 2013

#### INSTRUCTIONS

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) the Notice of Intent to Submit a Charter Application ("NOI") must be filed by the organizers of a proposed charter school to the Public Education Commission at the address below **AND** to the superintendent of the school district in which the charter school is proposed to be located. *Failure to notify may result in your application being rejected.*

This year the NOI must be submitted by 5:00 PM Mountain Time on **Tuesday, January 8, 2013**. Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission and the superintendent of the local school district by the January 8, 2013 deadline may result in the application being rejected. When you send the NOI to the superintendent of the school district in which your charter is to be located, you are strongly encouraged to send it by certified mail return receipt requested, or request a signed receipt when you deliver the NOI. Contact the local district regarding electronic filing.

Notice to the Public Education Commission should be delivered by one of the following methods:

- Electronically to: [Linda.Olivas@state.nm.us](mailto:Linda.Olivas@state.nm.us)
- By mail or personal delivery:  
PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
c/o New Mexico Public Education Department  
Attn: Ms. Linda Olivas, Administrative Assistant  
Options for Parents/Charter Schools Division  
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

The NOI is intended to provide the Public Education Commission with the primary point of contact among the charter developers, and preliminary information about the charter proposal, such as the school's mission statement, the school's focus, target student population to be served, enrollment projections, key innovations, etc. (not to exceed 5 pages).

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1. General Information

- Name of Proposed School

Dream Dine' (tentative)
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- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
K-8	180-200

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Gavin Sosa				
Mailing Address	PO Box 580				
City	Shiprock	State	NM	Zip	87420
Phone	505-948-2014				
Email	gavinsosa13@gmail.com				

2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school

Name	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, Experience
Lula M. Begay	Member	BS, MEd, EdD; Teacher and Instructional Coach, Navajo Language/Culture (38 years, retired)
Michael Thompson	Member	BA, MEd, EdS; Teacher and Curriculum Developer, English/LA (35 years)
Celeste Yazzie	Member	BA History, MA Elementary Ed; Teacher-Elementary, Personal Wellness, Adult Education (4 years)
Ravis Henry	Member	Interpretive Cultural Educator (3 years, Canyon De Chelly National Monument)
Gavin Sosa	Member	BA Sociology, MA Educational Leadership; Teacher, LA (6 years); NACA Leadership Fellow

3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB):

<p>Dream Dine' is a placed-based school in the fullest sense. Our integrated curriculum will be grounded in the unique culture, geography and history of Shiprock and the Dine' (Navajo) people. Professional educators will utilize a dual language methodology, using Dine' and English to teach and reinforce concepts and content. Experiential learning opportunities and service-learning projects will provide our students the local context to apply classroom content, empowering them to become local and global change agents.</p>
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4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Yes:  No:

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan.

N/A
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5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes:  No: .

6. If the charter proposal is a replication, identify the school(s) you are replicating and the data that you have that support why this model should be replicated.

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N/A

7. Vision/Mission statement. (2-3 sentences)

Dream Dine' will be a school where the Dine' philosophy, wisdom, values, language, culture and history are the heart of a challenging, experiential curriculum. We will strive to nurture curious and fearless young women and men who are fully committed to their personal and their community progress, relationships, identity and wellness.

8. Student population and geographical setting of the school

- Define the targeted geographical area of the proposed school from which you expect to draw a significant number of your students.

Located along the banks of the San Juan river in the Four-Corners region of New Mexico, Shiprock is the largest community on the Navajo Nation. In 2010, the population of the town and the surrounding area was approx. 8,200 and more than 35% of the population in under the age of 18. Dream Dine' school will be located within the community of Shiprock.

- Describe the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, ELL, and special education populations).

There are three district elementary schools currently located within Shiprock itself: Eva B. Stokely, Mesa, and Nizhoni. During the 2010/2011 school year these three schools had a total enrollment of approximately 525 students in the AYP-tested grades. 167 of these children had been labeled as English Language Learners (with Navajo primarily being identified as the home language); 69 had been identified as Students with Disabilities, and all but one student were considered 'economically disadvantaged'. According to the 2012 School Grade Report Card, Eva B. Stokely received a "D", while both Mesa and Nizhoni received an "F" rating. All three schools have been designated as "Restructuring 2" (R-2) by the State of New Mexico.

School Accountability Reports for the past four years demonstrate fluctuating growth and decline in both Math and Reading proficiency of the elementary school students at the 3 district elementary schools.

During the 2011/2012 school year, only 36% of Eva B. Stokely students were proficient in Math, a decline from 43% in 2010/2011 and 46% the year before that. Only 30% of students scored proficient in Reading in 2011/2012--the lowest proficiency rating in the past four years.

In 2011/2012 only 26 % of Mesa Elementary students scored proficient in Reading, down from a four-year high of 42% in 2010/2011. The 26% of students who were proficient in Math last year was the lowest rate since the 2008/2009 school year.

At Nizhoni Elementary almost 39% of students were proficient in Math last year. This was an improvement from 2009/2010 (27.7%) and 2008-2009 (19.6%), but it was a decline from the 2010/2011 school year, when 43.9% of students were proficient. Reading proficiency at Nizhoni has fluctuated from 46.4% in 2008/2009, down to 33.9% in 2009/2010, followed by a small jump up to 36.8% in 2010/2011, then back down to 33.3% last year.

The Math and Reading proficiency levels among ELL students are dramatically lower at all 3 schools, as are the proficiency rates for Students with Disabilities. This trend has been consistent for the past four years.

Tse Bit Ai Middle School (TBA) saw consistent growth in student's Math and Reading proficiency from 2006 through 2010, their scores have either leveled off or declined in the past two years.

2011 was the second straight year of decline in Reading proficiency after reaching a peak in 2009. The 34.4% Math proficiency of TBA students was a the lowest percentage since 2007.

Proficiency levels among students identified as ELL at Tse Bit Ai have stagnated or been on the decline

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recently as well. In Reading proficiency scores for students labeled as English Language Learners there has been a decline for the last four years, dropping below 30% in 2010 and 2011 for the first time in 7 years (down to 21.2% in 2011). Math proficiency among ELL students held steady (just above 20%) from 2006 to 2010, but in 2011 it dropped to 17.2%--the lowest rating since 2005.

While there have been areas to celebrate over the years, the trends indicate that schools in Shiprock struggle to get 40% of their students to score proficient in Reading or Math on a consistent basis. The challenge of providing quality education for the children of Shiprock and across the Navajo Nation is not new. In spite of years of tireless efforts by hard working students and families, professional educators, and committed principals and administrators, our schools have continued to fall short of the expectations set by the State and those of the community. We believe that educational institutions serving Shiprock need to deeply engage families and the community to align their goals, mission, vision and curriculum.

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.

Most students in and around Shiprock attend one of the Central Consolidated School District (CCSD) schools, or the BIE elementary/middle/high school (Shiprock Associated Schools Incorporated: SASI). For several years the total enrollment of the Central Consolidated School District has hovered around 7,000 students (this includes schools in Shiprock and other communities such as Kirtland, Fruitland, Newcomb, etc). We expect to build our school in the heart of Shiprock, drawing students from throughout the community. With an estimated per-grade enrollment of 20 students, we do not expect to dramatically disrupt the established schools in the area.

Dialogues and conversations with community members highlight the deepening concern and waning hope with the current educational situation here in Shiprock. We are engaging youth, parents, educators and elders in consultation about their aspirations for our children and community. Repeatedly we have heard calls for a more holistic, culturally based approach to education that focuses on student wellness, incorporates local indigenous knowledge, and prepares students for the rigorous academic expectations of college and beyond. We seek to meet this challenge by growing Dream Dine': a school that reflects the goals of our students, their families, our community and the state. And we intend to continue community engagement process as we move forward, increasing parent involvement and investment.

9. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for a school of the nature that will be proposed in the application (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program).

A 2011 report on the CCSD Summer Dine' Language Program highlights a growing demand for Dine' language and culture instruction in Shiprock. 180 students applied to participate in the free 10-day summer program, a dramatic increase from the previous two years. Attendance averaged 100 students per day even though transportation was not provided for students and in spite of a scheduling conflict with the Native Vision Sports Camp being offered in Shiprock at the same time. If transportation had been provided and if there hadn't been a scheduling conflict, we can expect that attendance would have been even higher for this program.

The stated purpose for this program was to "provide basic Dine' language instruction, and to enhance the Dine' students self-awareness and identity as Dine' people". In a post-program survey for parents and families, nearly 95% of respondents said they would support future Dine' language and culture education for their child, and over 90% indicated that they would like their child to continue in a class of this nature during the school year. These responses indicate strong local demand for culturally-based education here in Shiprock.

Dream Dine' has also hosted 2 community talking circles in Shiprock, one on December 3rd with 22 members of the Northern Dine' Youth Committee and another on December 4th with 9 parents from the F.A.C.E program at a local elementary school. We have also facilitated approximately 20 one-on-one and small-group conversations with educators, parents, grandparents, and community leaders over the past 18 months, along with countless informal conversations with community members.

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During our youth talking circle, participants were asked: "What was missing from your Elementary/Middle school years?" 10 youth specifically mentioned "culture" and "ceremonies" as something lacking. "Navajo language and songs" as well as "Outdoor activities/Teachings from the land" were mentioned 7 times each. The Shiprock community provides countless opportunities for educators to blend community knowledge, cultural teachings, and academic excellence. We believe that there has been a disconnect between the values and practices of the formal school system and the Dine' people, and this has been a root cause of many of the challenges in schools across the Navajo Nation. One Dine' youth summarized the situation well, stating that "the disconnect between classes...was missed. If they were connected and integrated--a much deeper understanding is what I feel like i'm missing." We are excited to create a school that holistically weaves together Dine' wisdom and philosophy with an academic curriculum to strengthen our students' identity.

Nine of the youth we spoke with stated that they would like to see Shiprock children become "advocates", "protectors", "participants", and "leaders" for their community, language, culture and land. This notion of local stewardship was best summarized by one Dine' youth: "I have an obligation to protect and carry on my language, culture and history. Protect the land, learn the ways of the 'white man' and be a warrior in that way." When asked to clarify his last comment, this young man explained that he strove for academic excellence in college so he could compete in the Western world. Our academically rigorous program, grounded in the context and experience of Shiprock, will develop the motivation, awareness, knowledge and skills for our students to be advocates and protectors of their culture, language, land and community, now and in the future.

The parents we spoke with overwhelmingly identified 'wellness' (physical, emotional and spiritual) as a fundamental concern for their children. The expectation that academic, personal and social health be in balance was repeated several times. One parent's goal for Shiprock children was "being in harmony in all aspects of your life whether it be work, play, or school." We believe that it is possible to meet this expectation through the development of an integrated academic and culturally-based curriculum for K-8 students in Shiprock, where personal and community progress and health are central.

These conversations have guided our work thus far as Dream Dine' strives to answer the two major calls to action by the community and families of Shiprock-area students—for an increase in the direct instruction of Dine' language/culture/history, and for schools to finally meet the academic, social and personal needs of students and the community. We believe that with the community's help, we can exceed these aspirations.

Additional quotes from our Talking Circles:

"Without our past and our history, we're empty vessels with nothing" (NDYC youth).

"It's sad but I know more about American culture than my own, and that's because of the schools" (youth).

"It is very powerful to know Navajo fluently and very important for strength of our community" (youth).

"I believe everything in Dine' teaching should be passed on, I encourage it" (parent)

10. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement in order to help it realize its vision / mission (e.g., non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).

We seek to implement proven best practices in the field of Indigenous Education:

\* A dual language program where professional educators consult with parents and elders to determine how English and Dine' best compliment each other as students develop dual-language fluency

\* Ongoing, well planned and collaborative professional development for teachers focused on:

- Second Language acquisition; integrating the Dine' Philosophy into all academic subject areas
- Cooperative learning and experiential learning strategies, and the use of alternative assessments
- Educators as participatory/action researchers of their students and curriculum

\* An integrated curriculum, and classes with mixed-aged groupings

\* A mentorship program where older students serve as mentors for younger students while practicing the skills needed to take on leadership roles within their community.

\* A "place-based" education, where curriculum is rooted in the history, geography, environment, science, politics and arts of the local community. This dynamic curriculum will be brought to life through hands-on activities and service-learning projects across Shiprock.

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11. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

When we consider the consistently poor performance of students in Shiprock, especially those labelled as ELL and 'special needs', the school-wide implementation of proven best practices for Native American students seems like the most appropriate and effective educational response. We are disappointed that a large and growing body of research highlights the multi-faceted benefits of culturally-based educational approaches, yet few schools on the Navajo Nation have attempted to implement such practices. We are combining the input of our community with our own years of experience as educators, along with an expanding awareness of innovative education approaches across the country and in schools on Native American lands to create Dream Dine': a dual language school, grounded in local, cultural values that utilizes hands-on educational experiences.

In response to Executive Order 13336 (April, 2004), Teresa McCarty and her colleagues were commissioned to identify promising practices in Native American education and to prepare a policy brief for the US Department of Education Office of Indian Education Programs. Reviewing the research on culturally-based education models, and looking specifically at the Nawahiokalani'opu'u Laboratory School in Hawaii, the Manokotak School in Alaska, and Rock Point Community School, Rough Rock Demonstration School and Tse'hootsooi' Dine' Bi'olta' on the Navajo Nation these researchers found "compelling empirical evidence that strong, additive, academically rigorous Native language and culture programs have salutary effects on both Native language and culture maintenance/ revitalization and student achievement, as measured by multiple types of assessments" (McCarty, 14). We are proposing a school where Dine' philosophy, wisdom, values, language, culture and history form the heart of a challenging, experiential curriculum. Our explicit intent is to nurture curious and fearless young women and men who are fully committed to both personal and community progress, relationships, identity and wellness.

McCarty and her colleagues identified the following "promising practices" which we seek to implement:

1. The need to "explicitly reject the remedial labels historically associated with bilingual and American Indian education" (10)
2. A bilingual/bicultural program that is "central, not auxiliary, to the curriculum" (10)
3. "Exceptionally high levels of parent involvement--a practice widely associated with enhanced student achievement but rarely ascribed to Native families" (10). We expect that our grassroots approach of engaging families from the beginning of the school design proces will lead to such necessary involvement.

Research has shown that innovative educational programs in Indigenous communities centered on culture, language and history have proven to be successful in improving students' academic achievement, their level of commitment to their communities, and their fluency with and appreciation of their heritage language. We expect student engagement, enjoyment and retention, family involvement, and academic achievement to increase simultaneously at Dream Dine'.

McCarty, T.L. (2011). The Role of Native Languages and Cultures in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Student Achievement. (Prepared for the Promising Practices and Partnerships in Indian Education Program Evaluation Group), pp. 2-16.

*Please Note: Should your charter be awarded, the founding governing body could undergo a background check to determine if it qualifies to be a board of public finance in the state of New Mexico.*

Signature of founder(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
[PRINT NAME]