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## OPTION FOR PARENTS CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION, 2014

#### 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 **Monday, January 13, 2014**. Notices of Intent that are not received by the Public Education Commission and the superintendent of the local school district by the January 13, 2014 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

Dzil Dit Looi School of Empowerment, Action and Perseverance (DEAP)
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- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
6-12	150

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Kayla D. Begay				
Mailing Address	PO BOX 52				
City	Navajo	State	NM	Zip	87328
Phone	505-488-3170				
Email	kdbegay@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
Kayla D. Begay	Member	BA Sociology, Education, Teacher-Elementary (3 years), NACA Leadership Fellow, Community Planner (3 years)
Prestene Garnenez	Member	BS Biology/Mathematics, MA Urban Planning, Laboratory Supervisor, Community & Regional Planner (5 years)
Diana Onco	Member	BA Applied Indigenous Studies, Teacher-Elementary (2 years)
Roscoe Smith	Member	Navajo Nation Council Delegate

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

Dzil Dit Looi School of Empowerment, Action and Perseverance will be a place-based middle/high school where partnerships between the school and community support both student and community success. DEAP will provide students an opportunity to reach their full potential by focusing on academics, agricultural science, student health and wellness, Diné culture and language. Students will engage in real world learning through community problem solving and action.
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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)

The mission of DEAP is to provide a high quality, culturally relevant learning environment that inspires, prepares and empowers students to take action in transforming their community and the world around them.  
Our Vision: DEAP strives to foster community empowerment by creating leaders that are academically prepared, critically conscious and committed to community action and development.

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.

The Red Lake Chapter includes Navajo Nation Reservation and Trust Land in both New Mexico and in Arizona. It borders the Crystal Chapter to the North, Mexican Springs to the East, Fort Defiance to the South, and Sawmill to the West. Further, it is approximately 20 miles from Window Rock, AZ, the capital of the Navajo Nation. A major north-south transportation corridor, Navajo Route 12, runs through Red Lake Chapter leading to Window Rock. The town of Navajo, New Mexico serves as Red Lake Chapter's administrative headquarters. The community is situated in a valley which is surrounded by red rocks bluffs, mountains to the north and west, and Dził Dít Looi (Fuzzy Mountain) to the East. According to the 2010 Census, the total population of the Red Lake Chapter—in both Arizona and New Mexico—was 2,028 with the larger portion of residents (1,856) living in New Mexico and a much smaller portion (172) in Arizona.

Over 96% of Red Lake Chapter residents are Native American; almost 50% of households have children. Of the total population, 47% are children under the age of 20. Red Lake and its surrounding chapters—Crystal, Mexican Springs, Sawmill, and Fort Defiance—have a combined population of 4,358 school-aged children and youth. In 2005-2009, 63% of Red Lake residents 25 years and over had at least graduated from high school and 8% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Thirty-seven percent were drop-outs—they were not enrolled in school and had not graduated from high school. While sixty percent of the total population lived in poverty, 70% of children under 18 years old lived below the poverty level.

Since the 1950's, Navajo Forest Products Industry, a tribal enterprise, employed many members of the Navajo Nation. However, NFPI closed in the 1990's due to environmental concerns and fiscal solvency. Beginning in August 2013, an environmental clean up has begun to take place, but with the loss of the industry, the area has struggled economically. The community currently consists of family farms and open grazing land. The town of Navajo serves as a "micro-commercial hub" for the surrounding communities/Chapters offering schools, a day-care center, the local market, a post office, a gas station, and a handful of other small businesses.

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

The Gallup McKinley County School District (GMCS D) operates 35 schools and serves 12,036 students; over 80% of students are Native American. GMCS D is one of the largest school districts in the state, in terms of area served. The district operates three schools in Navajo: Navajo Elementary, Navajo Middle School and Navajo Pine High School. Together the enrollment of students in the Navajo schools is 531. In school year 2012-13, Navajo Elementary served 276 students in grades PK-5; 24.4% of students are considered English Language Learners (ELL), 29.35% are enrolled in Bilingual Education, and 10.51% are enrolled in Special Education. According to the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), the school earned an "F" on its 2013 School Report Card, with the following student proficiencies: 13.9% Reading and 17.4% Math. Navajo Middle School enrolled 131 students in grades 6-8 in 2012-13, with 37.4% ELL, 25.95% enrolled in Bilingual Education and 12.21% enrolled in Special Education. Navajo Middle school also earned an "F" in its 2013 School Report Card, with student proficiencies of 21.4% in Reading and 22.1% in Math. In 2012-13,

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Navajo Pine High School served 124 students in grades 9-12, with 41.13% ELL, 26.61% enrolled in Bilingual Education and 16.4% enrolled in Special Education. Although Navajo-Pine High School fared better on their 2013 report card with an overall grade of "B". The school earned a "D" in both Graduation and College and Career Readiness. Of its cohort group of 34 similar schools, Navajo-Pine High School ranked 30th in College and Career Readiness, 26th in terms of School Growth, and 20th in Graduation.

Crystal Boarding School also serves students from the Red Lake-Navajo area. Crystal Boarding School is a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school serving students K-6, with 82.1% of students enrolled in Bilingual Education. Out of 139 students enrolled, 85 (61%) are from the Red-Lake-Navajo area. The New Mexico Standards Based Assessment data for school year 2011-12 shows 33.3% of students were proficient in Reading and 26.67% of students were proficient in Math.

Source for report cards:

[http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/docs/1213/SchoolGrading/043\\_075\\_GALLUP\\_MCKINLEY\\_COUNTY\\_SCHOOLS\\_NAVAJO\\_PINE\\_HIGH\\_SchoolGrading\\_2013.pdf](http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/docs/1213/SchoolGrading/043_075_GALLUP_MCKINLEY_COUNTY_SCHOOLS_NAVAJO_PINE_HIGH_SchoolGrading_2013.pdf)

<http://www.bie.edu/cs/groups/xbie/documents/text/idc1-024023.pdf>

- 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.

Students are currently being educated at the three Gallup McKinley County Schools (Navajo Elementary, Navajo Middle and Navajo Pine High School), the local Window Rock Unified School District and Crystal Boarding School (BIE). Most students in the Navajo, NM community attend Navajo Elementary but attend middle and high school outside the community.

With community dissatisfaction with current education options, a high student drop-out rate, and an expressed a need for a school that reflects the community's history, culture and natural resources, the Red Lake Chapter has passed two chapter resolutions (May 2012 and November 2013) in support of a charter school creation. Public meetings with community members suggest that agriculture is a viable option for both youth and community development. The school's focus on agricultural science will benefit learners interested in careers in both agriculture and other sciences while further developing the community's farming culture. By creating a curriculum that is relevant to community needs and interests, we will attract students interested in learning how to utilize resources around them. DEAP will implement the necessary learning experiences and opportunities to support and prioritize student and community interests.

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).

The Red Lake Chapter of the Navajo Nation, with concerns for the educational needs of youth, passed a letter of intent for creating a charter school and presented it to their state representative in the New Mexico legislature. Representative Patricia Lundstrom sponsored House Memorial 43, which was signed during the 2013 session. The memorial called for a work group to be formed with the express purpose of studying the feasibility of having a bi-state charter in the Red Lake-Navajo area. The study group met several times to explore the implications of drawing students from Arizona to a charter school located in New Mexico and to engage stakeholders in the community about the possibility of having a charter school. The work group held monthly meetings between July and December, 2013 which brought together representatives from the Red Lake Chapter, Crystal Chapter, Red Lake-Navajo Community Action Group, Native American Community Academy, Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, Department of Diné Education, New Mexico Public Education Department's Indian Education Division, Gallup McKinley County Schools, Dream Diné Charter School, New Mexico State University, New Mexico Indian Affairs, Teach For America-New Mexico, Navajo Nation Council Delegates, New Life Ministries, New Mexico Indian Education Committee, New Mexico House of Representatives, Health Education and Human Services Committee and many other community members.

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Planning team members held several community meetings to discuss charter school options and opportunities as well as facilitated focus groups to provide a platform for community members to discuss options, share ideas and plan. Updates regarding the charter school discussion occurred at monthly Red Lake Chapter Meetings and Community Action Group Meetings.

In order to evaluate the demand for a charter school, the planning team members developed a survey to assess the educational needs and hopes of the community. The planning team administered 116 surveys at various locations and events in the community including chapter house meetings, community residences, the New Life Learning Center (a local GED program) and at public meetings sponsored by the planning group between September and December 2013. The survey data provided significant information regarding the community's needs and wants for alternative education options. In terms of satisfaction with current schools, 60% of respondents thought the lessons were not motivating for students, 58% thought schools were not safe environments, and 53% thought students did not feel a sense of belonging at school. The survey also address career opportunities and identified career path interests among community members. The top three career paths were: Health Services, Natural Resources/Agriculture, and Industrial & Engineering Technology. In addition, 87% of respondents indicated that education at school should be based on Diné philosophy. Interestingly, 51% of respondents indicated that they know someone that has dropped out of school. Respondents listed the following reasons for student drop-outs: substance abuse, family responsibility, financial issues, gangs, lack of interest in school, low academics and pregnancy.

In addition to community meetings and surveys, planning team members also went door knocking to 64 community residences to gather input on existing school options and to further discuss the charter school possibility. Residents identified concerns for students' safety, educational attainment, and dissatisfaction with existing schools. Leaders in particular, raised concerns for student engagement in the existing educational institutions, the relevancy of the curriculum, and future employment prospects for young people. These conversations suggest a strong interest in the community for the charter school provided information to help shape the innovative features of the school.

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.).

\*DEAP will emphasize an agricultural science based curriculum aligned with both Diné Content Standards and Common Core State Standards. To enhance the agriculture component, the school will develop an Agriculture Immersion Program, an intensive and interdisciplinary program open to students who have a passion for understanding and continuing agricultural practices. Students will also complete summer internships with local farmers, universities and agribusinesses to gain hands-on experience in fields related to agriculture.

\*DEAP will foster student wellness and identity development through culturally responsive teaching methods, dialogue based courses, affinity groups and family involvement.

\*DEAP will adopt a mentoring system in which educators and staff will select a cohort of students to mentor for the duration of the their time at DEAP in order to support students in their journey for academic success, health and social wellness and in setting goals for a career path.

\*DEAP will make education a relevant experience by focusing on "place-based" education experiences that use academic skills, community knowledge and surroundings as a context for problem solving. Students will work to both understand and transform the community through service-learning projects.

\*DEAP will use Diné philosophy, culture and language as a means to make academic content accessible and relevant to all students, staff and community members. The Diné content standards will be followed to support students in character building, cultural competency, critical consciousness and fluency in Diné language.

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.

Our community outreach, surveys and findings have indicated dissatisfaction with the current educational options. Many students have given up on the public school system and either transferred out of Navajo public schools or dropped out, opting for a GED instead. More importantly, community members expressed a need for a school that supports the development of student wellness. Surveys indicated that the high drop out rates were

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a result of issues related to emotional, social and physical wellness (i.e. substance abuse, pregnancy). DEAP will support community members interested in learning experiences that are culturally responsive and address both personal and community interests and needs.

Through the interdisciplinary, agriculture-focused instruction at DEAP, students will develop strong math, science literacy and inquiry skills in learning environments both inside and outside of the classroom. Students will achieve success with the Common Core standards, be more interested and able to retain more when they learn abstract concepts through concrete, relevant applications within agricultural contexts, utilizing real world natural objects such as plants, animals and food. Agricultural practices are deeply rooted in Diné Philosophy and the history of the Red Lake-Navajo community. By incorporating agricultural science as a core component of the educational experience, we will be able to connect core curricular content and standards to culturally relevant, hands-on activities.

Mentoring has a solid research base that shows educational benefits for students. Mentored youth are more likely to stay in school and less likely to skip class or be absent from school. Mentors can help improve academic skills and increase the self-esteem of their mentee. Mentored youth are less likely to start drinking alcohol or use illegal drugs. With mentors that provide resources and support, DEAP students will be more likely to reach their academic and personal goals.

DEAP will help students achieve proficiency with standards by teaching them in the context of their local environment and community. This approach will develop their understanding of interactions between natural and human social systems and preparing them to be active members of their community with the skills they need to identify and resolve environmental, agricultural, and other local issues. Throughout the year students will participate in community service projects, providing opportunities for students to have a “voice” and sense of involvement in their community. Students at DEAP will contribute in a meaningful ways, while strengthening their connections to the surrounding community.

Diné language and culture will be considered an asset at DEAP, and be integrated into the school through the curriculum, instruction, accountability and school-family partnerships. The school will teach Diné language and forge meaningful relationships with families and the community to increase connectivity, help develop healthy student identities, and create an optimal learning environment for students. Dr. Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy has extensively examined how culturally responsive schooling has positively affected overall student learning and success: “the knowledge, norms, values, resources, and epistemologies of local communities must be viewed as legitimate and valuable and intimately integrated into schools... [there is] weakness in offering a one-size-fits-all kind of curriculum or teaching instruction. Context matters; local contextual clues offer insights to connecting children to their schooling and academic success follows.” We believe that using these approaches DEAP students will thrive-- with increased problem-solving skills, motivation and academic success, improved attendance, stronger school/community connections and a heightened sense of identity and personal efficacy.

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (2008) Culturally Responsive Schooling for Indigenous Youth,  
President’s Professor of Education, University of Alaska Fairbanks  
[http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach/indigenous\\_schooling\\_brayboy.pdf](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach/indigenous_schooling_brayboy.pdf)

*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]