



Partners For Developing Futures
Funding the next generation of charter school leaders.

August 12, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great honor and pleasure to write this letter of support for Eppie Lopez as he prepares to open up a charter school.

Eppie has been an educator for more than 10 years. He has successfully served in the community of Albuquerque schools and has a commitment and passion to ensure that the youth in New Mexico receive a quality education.

My name is Angela Bass and I serve as Vice President of Partners for Developing Futures. Partners for Developing Futures recruits, identifies and develops leaders of color to become educational leaders in communities that have been traditionally underserved in order to establish high achieving schools of excellence. Our long term goal is that these school leaders will serve as the next generation of leaders and they will be a catalyst for transformation in public education. One of Partners' initiatives is LEAD New Mexico. **Eppie Lopez is one of these talented entrepreneur leaders.**

Eppie was one of fifteen leaders selected to join our elite a leadership development academy in New Mexico called LEAD New Mexico. LEAD New Mexico stands for, Leadership for Excellence, Accountability and Diversity. Eppie engaged in a rigorous selection process where he exhibited strong leadership skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset. He demonstrated himself to be a critical thinker as well he is extremely thoughtful and reflective. One of the opportunities for the LEAD fellows is that they will be under consideration for receiving one of our grants of up to \$230,000.00.

Eppie Lopez is a strong and committed educational leader. He teaches with passion and purpose. During our academy sessions, he has clearly communicated his belief system and expectations for quality education for all children. He understands the urgent need to improve schools and shares his commitment to provide his students a quality education.

As a visionary, innovator and an entrepreneur, Eppie is intentional about providing students with a high quality, meaningful and community based school. His vision would not only provide students who would otherwise not receive such a rigorous, caring and high quality school experience. It is a noteworthy vision!



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I have served in public education for more than thirty years as well as my work with Partners for Developing Futures. I have worked with thousands of educators and I believe that Eppie possesses many qualities and characteristics one would hope to find in a leader. He is dedicated to education, he is dedicated to his students' success, he is a learner and he has a leadership voice that demands access and excellence for all children.

Again, it is with extreme pride that I submit this letter of support. Eppie is a passionate educator who will serve well in any community. I look forward to his continued contributions and leadership the New Mexico's educational community. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions at, 858-735-1247.

Best,

Angela Bass, Ed.D
Vice President,
Partners for Developing Futures

402 West Court Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88005 575-541-0145
Court Youth Center



8/16/13

New Mexico Public Education Department
Jerry Apodaca Education Building
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Public Education Charter Selection Committee,

I am writing this letter to show my support for RISE New Mexico. RISE includes components that are often missing in the education of our youth today. To include a process that utilizes the non-cognitive skills, not only allow for the development of a self-learning style but also helps a student to realize their potential and excel in any learning environment.

Many students today have disengaged from the current educational system for a number of reasons but one that I hear often is "how does that relate to me." By implementing a program that allows for cultural relevance will create in all students especially minority students an ownership that is missing in the present education system. Ownership leads to inspiration, which builds on self-esteem to allow for an empowerment that has not been tapped into by the majority of our youth. RISE will do just that cultivate self-motivating environments to help students succeed in school and in life.

Eppie Lopez and I are partners in LEAD New Mexico's first cohort. Over the year I have gotten to know him and believe he truly has a servant's heart for the youth of not only New Mexico but the country as well. His passion, integrity, loyalty and expertise of the education system are to be commended and I support him in creating a charter school that is unique to the community it will serve.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shakera Crawley', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Shakera Crawley
Assistant Director of the Court Youth Center

August 15, 2013

Dear Public Education Commission,

It is with great honor and pride that I give my professional support to R.I.S.E. New Mexico Elementary. In my eight years of servitude with the Public Education Commission, this is the application I longed for. With a mission to provide relevant and inspiring education through self empowerment, I had to personally delve into this application to determine sound pedagogy.

I find that the collaborative teaching of cognitive and non-cognitive skills places the child-growing focus on the quality of the nurturing. The attitudes, beliefs, self esteem and self efficacy of children and subsequent behaviors are the foundation of all learning; they define what one will become.

As R.I.S.E. Founders build capacity, they have further defined the foundational needs to make the R.I.S.E. model a success: Professional development based on annual strategic planning and comprehensive teacher induction will augment the delivery of dual-purpose education, Asset Based Campaign (ABC) and the CPR model (confidence, persistence and resilience).

They are also venturing into the essential yet chronically underfunded sector of wellness by establishing a commitment from me to establish a teacher wellness education and training program based on a three-tiered socio-ecological model approach: teacher effectiveness, teacher wellness and school safety. In addition, the Vistelar Group out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, stands at the ready to provide verbal defense and influence training to respond to verbal and physical conflict, child bullying, verbal aggression and campus intruders.

As I can personally attest, highly credentialed organizations of change are committed to the R.I.S.E. evolution. Thank you for your consideration. I miss you all and the wonderful work we accomplished together.

Wellness in Mind,

M. Andrew Garrison

M. Andrew Garrison, CEO & President
BODYFACTS Wellness Consulting

August 20, 2013

To Whom it may concern:

RISE New Mexico, an idea born of a vision of an equitable education for all children regardless of socio economic status, of language, of disability and of poverty. RISE NM began as an idea to foster a caring creative way of teaching children while making their learning relevant to today's student culture while providing opportunities for creativity and inspiration through an understanding of self. It is this understanding that not only empowers the students and their parents; it impacts community as a whole and serves as a fundamental agent of change to our communities.

RISE NM represents the best in education, a genuine concern for the community in which it will serve, this is demonstrated by Eppie's and Vanessa's commitment to the children and community in which they live, this is clearly outlined in their application as its based on research and data such as the *Persistence, Resilience and Confidence (CPR) model, their Asset Based Campaign (ABC) and their use of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional (CASEL) learning program.*

What RISE NM is not: It is definitely not your run of the mill type of operation where someone sets up shop in a poor community to make money who then hires all of their buddies to fill positions at the school. RISE NM is about two teachers who will take a "whole child" approach to teaching, who will in turn create a learning community which will benefit the larger area it serves by encouraging children to love learning by making school a positive and exiting experience. With this letter I wholeheartedly place my support behind RISE NM, a school for positive change in which must be duplicated in other parts of my state, New Mexico.

Sincerely,



Raymundo Lara
Las Cruces, New Mexico

elrayzi n@aol.com



*Sheryl Williams Stapleton
African American
Performing Arts Center
and Exhibition Hall
310 San Pedro Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110*

Joby Wallace, President, Board of Directors

August 15, 2013

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of the RISE New Mexico Charter School application to the New Mexico Public Education Department for approval to establish the school.

New Mexico's schools have been ranked nationally in lowest percentiles for at least the last ten years. It has been known that many of the schools in New Mexico are still operating the same way for the last twenty years. RISE New Mexico focuses on education in a non tradition aspect. It encompasses the non cognitive as well as cognitive skills for students.

As the President of the African American Performing Arts Center (AAPAC) that operates a community after school education program. I am well aware of the fact that when students' non-cognitive skills are developed they performed better in schools than their counter parts. These students also are very successful on their jobs as well.

On behalf of the AAPAC I strongly support RISE New Mexico application for Charter School.

Sincerely,
Joby Mitchell-Wallace

Joby Mitchell-Wallace, President

To the members of the Public Education Commission,

As a teacher in the South Valley, I know the importance of character education and instilling grit in our students. Nothing will make a bigger impact on our kids than the teaching of resiliency in the face of challenges. RISE New Mexico has the chance to start a school from the ground up with a combination of critical thinking pedagogy and resiliency education. It is important that all students have a chance, an opportunity to become more than just successful at standards and tests. To build better people, you need to first acknowledge school's role in that construction. RISE New Mexico is part of that acknowledgement.

Knowing personally Eppie Lopez, I know his commitment to making the students the primary voice in any school he creates. His ability to connect with students, to keep his focus on the kids is what will make this school successful. The current climate makes it hard for a new charter to find its approval and rightly so. The creation of an educational community is one of the most vital and challenging efforts we have. No issue matters more than the effective education of our young people. This includes the character education of them as well.

RISE New Mexico has put together a proposal with initiatives backed by the best data available in education. The curriculum proposed is ambitious and well positioned for the highest efficacy. The curriculum of a Dual Purpose education acknowledges the holistic learning that must occur within the education community. The Dual Purpose education includes an Asset Based Campaign, Inspirational Curriculum, Ownership Culture, and School Wide Social/Emotional program. It is for all these reasons above that I recommend that RISE New Mexico is approved by the New Mexico Public Education Commission. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tomas Ponce

6th Grade Humanities Teacher

South Valley Academy

tom.ponce@gmail.com

Dear PEC Commissioners,

I am writing to publically endorse the petition filed by RISE New Mexico and its founder Mr. Eppie Lopez. I have known Mr. Lopez for a number of years including his time at USC where he honed his skills and an education entrepreneur. Mr. Lopez and his team are deeply committed to serving the youth of New Mexico and RISE NM has both the will and skill to succeed and meet the aspirations of the students and families who will place their trust in the RISE team.

I have the honor of being a public educator for 40+ years including a decade as a California superintendent, the founder of California's first charter school (the second in the nation) and co-founder of the nation's first charter management organization (Aspire Public Schools). I am proud of the fact that all parents have the ability to choose the school's their children attend and believe that all schools must serve students well. I am a proponent for closing or reconstituting low performing schools and do not believe low capacity charter petitions should be granted.

RISE however has displayed its capacity and will to develop an educated citizenry and ensure that RISE students will realize their deepest hopes and aspirations. RISE will enrich the quality of life for their students as well as prepare more youth to do what they love and earn what they need.

Eppie Lopez and his RISE petition are a concrete example of what can happen when passionate individuals recognize the dignity of being an educator and commit their hearts and minds to better the opportunity equation for youngsters whose dreams deserve a chance to become their reality. I fully endorse Mr. Lopez and his RISE NM vision and encourage you to approve his petition as a gift the PEC can give to the citizens and students of New Mexico.

Deepest regards and thank you for your service,

Don Shalvey Ed.D.
Deputy Director US Programs
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

R.I.S.E. Input from Public Comment site

Email	Name	School	Comments
abeytah@msn.com	Henry J. Abeyta	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/22/13	<p>I am writing in support of the critical mission proposed by RISE New Mexico in educating our future generations. As a graduate of Espanola High School in the 1970s, I know personally how important it is to have the right influences in life and the tremendous opportunity for our educational system to be an important contributor. While I personally benefited from individual teachers who inspired me to reach beyond what I thought possible, my overall assessment is that the system in place was similar to what many students face today in Albuquerque's South Valley, the very place RISE New Mexico proposes to focus on. I base these comments as a result of having participated in the MANOS program, an educational outreach initiative of Sandia National Laboratories emphasizing Math and Science, encouraging middle schoolers to consider a educational path that would lead them to become future scientists and engineers. What I experienced directly is that with the right inputs, students do respond with self-confidence and motivation to invest in their own futures. I believe that the approach proposed by RISE New Mexico has the necessary ingredients to make a difference through the combined approach emphasizing both cognitive and non-cognitive character skills. Through similar influences in my early life, I was challenged to pursue an engineering degree that ultimately led to a Master's in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University. This opened up opportunities through my career at Sandia National Laboratories to contribute to critical national security programs both in the US and internationally. It is my assessment that RISE New Mexico through its commitment and approach will inspire many to reach beyond their imaginations, give them the knowledge-base and skills to succeed, and provide opportunities to future achievement that will reflect well on our city and state. I whole-heartedly endorse this proposed Charter and hope you look favorably upon it as it moves forward! Henry Abeyta</p>
88anairda@gmail.com	Adriana Garcia	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/22/13	<p>To the Public Education Commission</p> <p>Growing up I never felt confident in school. I later on was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and found that the best learning environment for me were smaller classrooms and teachers who cared. Unfortunately the teachers I had only stuck with their syllabus and didn't care whether their students passed or not. As a new mother I want my son to have a fun learning experience and attend a school that actually cares about his education, potential, and self being. I believe RISE New Mexico stands out in that way and will give my son the confidence he'll need not only in school but in life!</p> <p>Adriana Garcia</p>

R.I.S.E. Input from Public Comment site

Email	Name	School	Comments
bminnerly@nmmediaarts.org	Blake Minnerly	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/21/13	To: New Mexico Public Education Department Charter School Division I am writing this letter in support of the charter application of the RISE New Mexico Charter School submitted by Eppie Lopez. I believe that RISE New Mexico would be an outstanding addition to the educational landscape of our state and would well-serve many, many students who would benefit from it's combination of cognitive and non-cognitive pedagogies. I am a level three licensed New Mexico educator with over twenty years of classroom experience at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary level. I have worked at public, private and charter schools and am currently co-department head of media arts at the Media Arts Collaborative Charter School. I am also a National Artist- Teacher Fellow, granted by the Surdna Foundation and a LEAD New Mexico Fellow, granted by Partners for Developing Futures. This wide range of experience has provided me with substantial insight into what works and what does not in terms of educational pedagogy that can reach underserved populations. I can say with confidence that RISE New Mexico will work, because it understands that underserved students require much more than just academic support. They require personal, emotional and communal support as well. RISE NM will provide that balance by developing curriculum that is culturally relevant to the population they serve and thereby inspires those students to see themselves as part of a rich, vital culture that can and will succeed educationally. RISE's target population is traditionally a low-income underserved population that has long struggled to achieve academically. I believe strongly that RISE's approach is an innovative and caring response to this problem. As a LEAD New Mexico Fellow, I have been privileged to work with mr. Lopez as part of our cohort and have been privy to his plans for RISE NM as they have developed. I have found him to be a highly dedicated, passionate and caring educator and a talented administrator. I have no doubt that he will be able to achieve RISE New Mexico's mission and provide a caring, balanced educational experience to students who have too often slipped through the cracks of our current educational system. I ask you to grant him that opportunity. Thank you, Blake Minnerly, MSME Media Arts Co-Department Head Media Arts Collaborative Charter School
martinjolea@gmail.com	Martin Olea	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/20/13	To whom it may concern, I write this communication to express my enthusiastic support of R.I.S.E. Academy. Having grown up in circumstances similar to the children that will be served by this visionary school, I can personally attest to the great need of viable alternatives that emphasize the affective domain and emotional intelligence in conjunction with academics. Too often, our schools implement technocratic approaches to education that are void of any considerations to the unique issues our highest- at- risk students in our great state. We will never grow our own educational vision and its moral imperative as New Mexicans, if we continue to subscribe to paradigms from people who aren't rooted in our communities or understand where our children are coming from. R.I.S.E. is a great opportunity to implement a new way of doing school from a ground truth new Mexican perspective, with the intent of truly meeting the unique cultural, social and emotional needs of our children. Martin Olea
shaunapointer@yahoo.com	Shauna Pointer	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/21/13	To whom this may concern, I am writing to express my support of RISE New Mexico and their purpose and vision for their school. I believe their passion in raising up strong students academically and with the drive and persistence that's needed in our community is vital to leadership in our schools. As a parent of a 4 and 7 year old, I think about building character in our kids more than just learning from books. I want our kids to have confidence, passion, drive, and to be able to bounce back when they fail. Many times, it's the life experiences that teach you more than what you were taught in school. Specifically, I believe this school initiative is needed in the South Valley of Albuquerque to raise up students with a good work ethic and the confidence to be a great leader (no matter what field they fall into). This school would be an asset to Albuquerque and to all the families of the students that may attend. Shauna Pointer (505) 315-9779

R.I.S.E. Input from Public Comment site

Email	Name	School	Comments
computer muscle87 @msn.com	Josh Salazar	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8-21-13	<p>Dear Public Education Commission,</p> <p>As a new parent my priorities have changed to the development and care of my child. During this phase in my son's life his educators are his grandparents, aunts, uncles and most importantly his mother and myself. Our role as educators are to provide him with basic life knowledge and skills but as we all know time passes quickly and soon he will be in grade school. This new transition for him will be a crucial time in his life and as his father my decision in which school to send him to is equally important.</p> <p>Looking back to my childhood I wish my personal talents would have been focused on rather than just learning a basic curriculum. This would highly benefit the development and future success of every child exposed to this type of education. This is what I believe RISE New Mexico will bring to our community.</p> <p>We have too many public and private schools that revolve around the same political philosophies. These practices have proven time and time again to be a failure because they don't put the children first. This is a huge reason why our state is ranked so low in the country.</p> <p>RISE definitely seems to be a solution to the problem and I completely endorse this bright new idea on how to educate our children. I'm looking forward to a better learning experience for my son through RISE New Mexico.</p> <p>Sincerely Joshua Salazar Computermuscle87@msn.com</p>
anitavsi@u sc.edu	Anita Singh	Albuquerque - R.I.S.E. New Mexico 8/20/13	<p>Dear New Mexico Public Education Department,</p> <p>My name is Anita Singh and I am currently a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership student at The University of Southern California. I also serve as the Career Services Specialist for University of Southern California's Rossier Online Programs, http://rossieronline.usc.edu/. Through my role as a Career Services Specialist, I worked with Mr. Eppie Lopez.</p> <p>I am writing in support of RISE New Mexico because of the school's curriculum design. The fact that the school plans to use curriculum that embeds the best cognitive approaches with character skills will help students grow into productive members of society.</p> <p>When it comes to opening up a charter school, it is essential that the team developing the school's model involve the community where the school will be located. With RISE New Mexico, Mr. Eppie Lopez designed a school community that will meet the needs of students in the Albuquerque, New Mexico area. He is thinking about the students not just members of a school community, but as a member of the global community.</p> <p>As a graduate of University of Southern California's Master of Arts in Teaching program, Mr. Eppie Lopez enhanced his ability to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. He is extremely passionate about working with high-needs students, and he will make RISE New Mexico one of the top-performing schools in the country.</p> <p>Best, Anita Singh</p>