



Santa Fe Charter  
Schools Division

JAN 9 2012

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PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
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HANNA SKANDERA  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
GOVERNOR

## OPTION FOR PARENTS CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION

#### INSTRUCTIONS

According to NMSA § 22-8B-6(B) this Notice of Intent to Submit 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 is due by close of business, January 10, 2012. Notice by mail will be timely if it is postmarked on or by January 6, 2012.

Notice to the Public Education Commission should be delivered one of the following methods:  
Electronically to: [KellyCallahan2@state.nm.us](mailto:KellyCallahan2@state.nm.us)  
By mail or personal delivery:

PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION  
c/o New Mexico Public Education Department  
Attn: Ms. Kelly Callahan, General Manager  
Options for Parents/Charter Schools Division  
300 Don Gaspar, Room 301C  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

The NOI is to provide information for the primary point of contact, enrollment projections and a concise proposal overview (not to exceed 5 pages).

You are strongly encouraged to send notice to the Superintendent of your local district by certified mail return receipt requested, or request a signed receipt when you deliver the NOI. Contact your local district regarding electronic filing.

#### 1. General Information:

Name of Proposed School:	Ray of Hope Charter High School	
Primary Contact Person	Margaret Woods	
Mailing Address:	6503 Honeylocust Ave NW	
City: Albuquerque	State: NM	Zip: 87121
Phone: 505-331-6007	Email: woods_mar@msn.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	Employment	Qualifications
Margaret Woods	Founder Governing Council President	New Mexico Human Services Department	Masters Level Social Worker/Licensed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Shawn Christensen	Co-founder Principal	St. Mary's School/ Archdiocese of Santa Fe	10+ years of teaching experience MA in Curriculum and Instruction Currently applying for Level III Licensure Working on NM Administration License (expected conferral Dec 2012)
Don Woods	Co-founder Governing Council member	Retired teacher from APS	Retired after 15 years as a Special Education teacher MA in Special Ed. Retired from NFL after 7 years with San Diego Chargers/ San Francisco 49ers
Candice Marquez	Governing Council Member	Sonographer with Presbyterian Hospital	Experience in the medical field

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

The focus of Ray of Hope Charter School is to educate at-risk youth by helping the student to identify and learn to cope with barriers to their education. This will be achieved by integrating a mental health support system within the academic curriculum. Additionally, individualized academic plans will be created for each student to ensure that their needs are met. Ray of Hope will be modeled after Community High School in Ann Arbor Michigan.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Describe the entity and role it will have in the school's operational plan. Yes:  No: X

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

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

N/A

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

Ray of Hope is a credit-based high school in the Albuquerque area that will provide a supportive environment in which to educate at-risk youth by integrating mental health support into the curriculum, thereby, helping students develop an awareness of respect for self and community and preparing them for graduation and for life.

8. Student body to be served, including key demographic data and targeted geographical area of the proposed school. Describe the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, ELL and special education populations). 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.

Ray of Hope intends to primarily serve students who have demonstrated previous difficulties within traditional school settings and are at risk of dropping out or are unable to integrate into a regular high school setting. There are many students within the school system who are unable to finish school due to problems with the law, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty, language, or a myriad of other emotional problems. We expect to have a large population of special needs students.

The following 2010 data was gathered from NMPED. In New Mexico, 7,689 students (5.04%) dropped out of high school. The percentage of students who drop out of school in Albuquerque Public Schools is 6.11%. We plan to open Ray of Hope on the Westside of Albuquerque. West Mesa has a drop-out rate of 6.6% and Rio Grande's drop-out rate is 6.3%. Atrisco Heritage's first graduating class will graduate in 2012, so there are not clear numbers for them yet.

Additionally, the percentages of students in the area we intend to serve who graduate within 4 years is lower than the averages for the nation, state and APS as a whole. Nationally, 76.7% of students graduate in 4 years. In New Mexico, that rate is 63.7%. APS has a slightly higher graduation rate at 64.7%, but West Mesa at 52.5% and Rio Grande at 49.6% are considerably lower.

We hope to bring students to Ray of Hope who are at risk of dropping out for whatever reason and help them to overcome the obstacles to graduation. We hope to provide an alternative for students who have had trouble in other institutional settings.

**9. Evidence and assessment of a community need for a school of this nature: Detail any objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program.**

Ray of Hope plans to serve students who are at risk of dropping out of school. These students may have already been in trouble with the law. Many of them will be economically disadvantaged and/or receive special education services. Many of them may be unable to perform within the traditional school setting or need more one-on-one assistance than the traditional school can provide. The drop-out rates of the local schools are higher than the APS average and four year graduation rates are significantly lower than APS. This clearly demonstrates that a school such as Ray of Hope would satisfy a vital need in its immediate community. Here are some statistics that will validate this position.

According to the APS website (<http://www.aps.edu/about-us/district-information>) :

**Nearly six out of 10 students qualify for free or reduced meals.**

“When our children do not graduate from high school, they are setting themselves up for a rocky and difficult adulthood. The statistics are clear: people who do not complete high school are more likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, receive public assistance, serve jail time, be divorced, and be single parents who have children who drop out of high school themselves.”

Fight Poverty: Lower High School Drop Out Rates, by John Bridgeland

<http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/news.aspx?id=d7489aaa-8d79-4382-a6a6-fcecbcaa4ada&refer=rss>

**More than one in 10 students receive special education services; one in 20 receives gifted services.**

“According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students, the arrest rates of youth with learning or emotional/behavioral disabilities who have dropped out are significantly higher than the rates of youth in the general population who have dropped out.”

“For students with learning disabilities, 62% of those who drop out are arrested compared with 15% who graduate.”

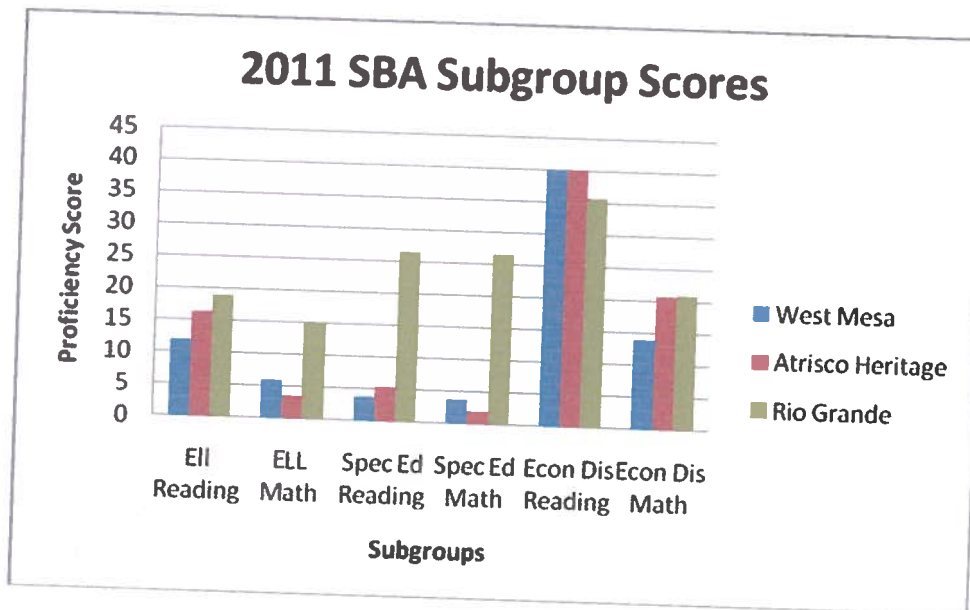
Sinclair, Mary F. et. al., Are we pushing students in special education to drop out of School?, Policy Research Brief, v6 n1 Apr 1994.

[http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_ERICEExtSearch\\_SearchValue\\_0=ED370325&ERICEExtSearch\\_SearchType\\_0=no&accno=ED370325](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICEExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED370325&ERICEExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED370325)

The APS Homeless Project served more than 5,000 homeless students in 2008-09. In the United States, about 1.2 million children were homeless, or without a steady home, last year. They lived in motels, shelters, tents, cars and on the streets. More than 16,000 of them are in New Mexico. New Mexico for years has slumbered at the bottom of national rankings for child homelessness. On a scale of 1 to 50, with 50 being the worst, the state was ranked 45 in 2010.

[http://www.daily-times.com/ci\\_19572856&source=tweetmeme](http://www.daily-times.com/ci_19572856&source=tweetmeme)

This graph showed the proficiency scores from West Mesa, Atrisco Heritage and Rio Grande High Schools on the NMSBA. It clearly shows that there is a need in this community.



10. Key innovative, unique and/or programmatic features the school will implement in order to accomplish its vision and mission (non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.)

The primary innovation we plan to implement is to interweave a mental health support system into our academic curricula. This will be accomplished in the following ways:

1. All students will participate in a "Think-In" period at the start of the day and after lunch. They will meet in a small group setting with their mentor teacher and discuss any issues that may affect their ability to learn. If they are unable to focus on school, there will be social workers on site to assist them.
2. All students will have a mentor teacher who will assist in individualized academic plans, creation and development of student portfolios, and tracking progress toward graduation.
3. All students will participate in a Mental Health class daily which will assist them in overcoming the obstacles they face toward graduation. This class will be administered in accordance with New Mexico State Health Standards.

Ray of Hope will utilize a year-round school schedule with a four day school week and longer school hours. The purpose of this schedule is to reduce summer learning loss and to give students less downtime in the summer. Studies have shown that at-risk students get into more trouble during the summer when they are largely unsupervised. The four day school week allows for a weekly professional development day in which to assist our teachers in teaching our unique at-risk population.

We plan to develop community relationships in order to help teach our students. The model for building community relationships that we are basing our curriculum around is the one utilized at Community High School in Ann Arbor, MI. <http://www.a2community.org/community.home/home>

We will utilize a community support liaison, whose position will be to work with the community, families, and students to ensure that the students have all the support possible. They will assist with job placement, internships, and any other connections or resources within the community that our students may need.

We plan to partner with New Mexico Highlands University for social work interns.

11. 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.

We believe that by offering the mental health support, we will be able to assist students who have often been forgotten and have had difficulties with success. This population is not very well served by traditional schools. We plan to use proven counseling strategies, such as Speechcraft (Toastmaster's), used in treatment facilities and therapeutic high schools to support student academic achievement.

We plan to offer rigorous academic curricula using continuous improvement methods to track student progress and to adjust instruction as needed. Remediation will be provided when necessary. All students will have individualized education plans, which will allow students, parents, and teachers to monitor their progress.

Signature of founder(s)

Margaret Woods

Date: 01-08-2012

Margaret K. Woods  
[PRINT NAME]

Don R. Woods

Date: 01-08-2012

Don R. Woods  
[PRINT NAME]

Shawn M Christensen

Date: 01-08-2012

Shawn M Christensen  
[PRINT NAME]