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HANNA SKANDERA  
SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
Governor

September 5, 2012

Dear Public Education Commissioners:

Enclosed is the 2012 Charter School Application Final Recommendation and Evaluation for Taos International School applying for a state charter in Taos Municipal Schools to serve grades K-8 and represented by founders, Nadine Vigil and Dr. Carlos R. Pagán. Please know that the staff at the Charter Schools Division and four teams of independent reviewers gave full consideration to the information gathered in this process.

The review teams and the Charter Schools Division (CSD) have provided evidence and rationale gathered in the team analyses and in this evaluation to fully understand the recommendation.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to ensure that New Mexico's Charter Schools represent the best of alternative and innovative options for parents and students.

Sincerely,

Kelly Callahan  
Interim Director  
Options for Parents: Charter Schools Division

## I. Recommendation

Approve:

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated the capacity to implement the education and governance/management plans as described in the application. Nothing was identified that would indicate the applicant(s) do not have the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.

Approve with Conditions:

Overall the application is complete and adequate; and during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) demonstrated the capacity to implement the education and governance/management plans as described in the application. Nothing was identified that would indicate the applicant(s) do not have the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school; however, the conditions listed below are required by law and must be addressed. If the PEC determines that there are any other conditions that need to be addressed, then those should be negotiated in a preliminary contract.

### PROPOSED CONDITIONS

The Applicant will negotiate a preliminary contract with the Public Education Commission pursuant to 22-8B-9.1:

1. Obtain standing as an approved Board of Finance
2. Secure a facility that meets PSFA Approval
3. Complete the planning-year checklist

Deny:

Overall the application is either incomplete or inadequate; or during their Capacity Interview, the applicant(s) did not sufficiently demonstrate the experience, knowledge, and competence to successfully open and operate a charter school.

The Charter Schools Act, in paragraph 1 of Subsection L of Section 22-8B-6 NMSA 1978, states that a chartering authority may approve, approve with conditions or deny an application. A chartering authority may deny an application if:

- (1) the application is incomplete or inadequate;
- (2) the application does not propose to offer an educational program consistent with the requirements and purposes of the Charter Schools Act;
- (3) the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was involved with another charter school whose charter was denied or revoked for fiscal management or the proposed head administrator or other administrative or fiscal staff was discharged from a public school for fiscal mismanagement;

- (4) for a proposed state-chartered charter school, it does not request to have the governing body of the charter school designated as a board of finance or the governing body does not qualify as a board of finance; or
- (5) the application is otherwise contrary to the best interests of the charter school's projected students, the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate.

**OPTIONS FOR PARENTS – CHARTER SCHOOLS DIVISION**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Reed", written over a horizontal line.

By:

Interim Director of Options for Parents, or Designee

## I. Overall Score Sheet

Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Application		
• Executive Summary	4	4
• Education Plan/Academic Framework	73.5	96
• Organizational Plan and Governance/Organizational Framework	53	64
• Business Plan/ Financial Framework	13	18
• Evidence of Support	8	10
• Required Appendices	2	2
Capacity Interview	30	30
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>183.5</b>	<b>224</b>

## II. Explanation Regarding Score Sheet

In the final recommendation and analysis the review team and the CSD considers the overall score as well as the score in each individual section. For example, while the total possible points in the Business Plan only equals 18 points, it is essential that an applicant school score high in this section and have a sound financial plan. If an applicant school receives a low score in this section then the review team carefully considers that in their final analysis. Also please note that while the review team did not score the community input hearing, the review team and the CSD may reference it in the final recommendation and evaluation if pertinent information was offered that contradicts or affirms what was found in the application or the capacity interview. Second, if the applicant school's proposal did not answer any prompt as a result of applicability (e.g., the applicant school will be an elementary school and so did not provide responses to graduation-related prompts) then the review team and CSD will adjust the total possible points in the application section where the non-applicable item(s) is found as well as in the final score.

### III. Final Analysis

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Education Plan/Academic Framework	73.5	96
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section</p> <p>The Education Plan section of the application requires the applicants' description of the proposed school's size, vision, mission, goals, curriculum, graduation requirements, instructional program, how special populations will be served, and its assessment and accountability plan.</p> <p>The mission and vision presented for the proposed Taos International School are adequately stated. The school intends to open with grades K-1 and 6 with a projected 120 students. At full enrollment: the school will serve grades K-8, with a requested enrollment cap of 360.</p> <p>Educational goals were developed for Student Academic Performance, Student Academic Growth, and Attendance. However, the Achievement Gaps, Recurrent Enrollment, and Growth for Lowest 25% goal subsections were addressed from an organizational perspective and provided plans for intervention, but did not provide student performance goals as required. The academic goals that were provided would require an adjustment in the target date for achievement during the contract negotiation process if the application is approved. Additionally, goals not provided would require development based on the information included in the narrative.</p> <p>The school chose to develop two organizational goals that focus on designation as a world school by the International Baccalaureate organization, one to officially offer the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the second to officially offer the Middle Years Program (MYP).</p> <p>The narratives for the curriculum and instruction subsections are uneven. Significant information is provided for the IB philosophical approach and curriculum framework, but not for the language immersion program. Research is provided to support the language immersion program, but not clearly referenced for the IB program. Timelines provided for development of the instructional program and continued alignment of the curriculum with NM State Standards/Common Core Standards is vague and lacking in detail. The narrative provided for the instruction subsection does not fully address quality instructional practices for either the dual language program or the IB program.</p> <p>The Special Populations subsection requirements are fully addressed and adequately presented. Overall, the Assessment and Accountability subsection provides adequate information.</p> <p>The education plan section, as written, is uneven. The applicants' knowledge and experience are demonstrated in various subsections; however, the narrative is inconsistent with some subsections inadequately addressed and others fully and adequately addressed.</p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Organizational Plan and Governance/Organizational Framework	53	64
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section</p> <p>The Organizational Plan and Governance section of the application requires the applicants' to address the governing body creation/capacity, governing body training and evaluation, leadership and management, organizational structure of the school, employee relationships, community/parent/employee involvement in governance, student policies, student recruitment and enrollment, legal compliance, partnership/contractor relationship (if applicable), waivers, transportation and food, and facilities.</p> <p>The description of the founders' qualifications and the composition of the proposed governing body reflect a range of expertise, knowledge and experience, and demonstrate the capacity to oversee a successful public charter school. Training for new governing body members is addressed and points of focus for an annual self-evaluation of the governing body are provided. The school's organizational chart and narrative description clearly reflect the relationship between administrative, teaching, and support staff. Job descriptions for key staff are clearly stated and align with the organizational chart. Proposed staffing plans, however, do not align with the 5-year budget plan.</p> <p>The school calendar and schedule demonstrate compliance with state requirements and a professional development plan is included. A comprehensive set of proposed personnel policies are presented in the application appendices. Community/parent/employee involvement in governance, however, is broadly addressed and the plan lacks some detail.</p> <p>Student discipline policies are included and adequate. The school's proposed lottery and enrollment processes are clearly outlined; however, disenrollment is not addressed.</p> <p>The Legal Compliance subsection is adequately addressed. A partnership with New Mexico International School is noted as a possibility; the proposed partnership does not fall under the definition of a legal partnership that would require an agreement.</p> <p>The school is not seeking any waivers and will not be providing transportation or food services.</p> <p>Although the school has not secured a facility, it has identified some possibilities. PSFA has provided a letter of approval of the Taos International School Facility Master Plan.</p> <p>Overall, with minor exceptions, the Organizational Plan and Governance/Organizational Framework section is adequately addressed by the applicants.</p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Business Plan/ Financial Framework	13	18
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section</p> <p>The Business Plan/Financial Framework Section requires the applicants to address projected revenue, a five-year budget plan based on the revenue, financial policies and oversight, compliance, and sustainability.</p> <p>The 910B5 revenue projection is adequately completed.</p> <p>Overall, the Business Plan/ Financial Framework section is strong in policy, but suffers from a lack of alignment with aspects of the application narrative such as the staffing plan, some items in the budget narrative, and first year expenditure needs that were not addressed in the 5-Year budget Plan. These errors appear to be the result of a lack of attention to details prior to submission of the application, rather than a question of the applicants' overall capacity.</p> <p>The applicants indicated that they would seek private funding that would be more accessible once the application is approved.</p>		

Application Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Executive Summary, Evidence of Support, Required Appendices	14	16
<p>Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section</p> <p>Taos International School intends to offer an International Baccalaureate/Dual Language Program for grades K-8. The brief Executive Summary indicates that not all students requesting the dual language program offered in the local elementary school have the opportunity to participate due to limited space. If approved, Taos International School will be the only school outside Albuquerque offering the International Baccalaureates' Primary and Middle Years Programmes. Mandarin Chinese will be offered as a third language.</p> <p>The applicants have provided evidence of support for the school; outreach prior to submitting the application indicated a total of 133 prospective students for grades K, 1 and 6. Letters of support are provided from community members, including the mayor, a retired educator, a community organization and parents.</p> <p>All required appendices have been provided.</p>		



Section	Points Received	Applicant School's Possible Points
Capacity Interview	30	30

**Evidence/Statements Supporting Score in this Section**

Both founders are experienced educators and during the capacity interview, clearly demonstrated their knowledge, experience and capacity to open and operate a public charter school. Dr. Pagán was the lead founder of Corrales International School and New Mexico International School, both located in Albuquerque.

**Other Pertinent Information**

Taos International School proposes to open with 120 students in grades K, 1, and 6 and to ultimately serve grades K-8. The requested enrollment cap is 360.

Based on the PED Charter Schools data, 5 charter schools (3 district-authorized and 2 PEC-authorized) within the Taos Municipal Schools geographical boundaries now serve 27% of the district enrollment. With the addition of this school, if approved, charter schools would serve 42% of the district enrollment.