

2010 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION ANALYSIS

School Name: Uplift: School of Expeditionary Learning

Review Date: 8/27/2010

I. CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED

The Charter School Mission Statement should communicate the essence of the school to stakeholders and to the public and should provide the focal point to which all other sections of the school’s plans align. In addition, the proposed charter school and its mission must be in the best interest of the students and community that it proposes to serve.

ANALYSIS: CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION AND STATEMENT OF NEED

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Mission Statement</u> The mission statement for the School of Expeditionary Learning (USEL) does not indicate who the school seeks to serve including student grade levels.</p> | <p>P 14</p> |
| <p><u>Achievement of Mission/Goals</u> The mission statement uses educational terms that are not defined here or in other parts of the application (e.g., nurturing environment, individual voice, etc.) and does not explain how these aspects of the mission will be fulfilled.</p> <p>In regard to the second goal, the application does not give details about the Implementation Review process of the Expeditionary Learning Core Practices, or identify the criteria in the assessments.</p> <p>In the third goal, the application does not state how the school will measure parent involvement in the “<i>Student-led Conferences</i>” and “<i>Celebrations of Life</i>.”</p> | <p>P 14 <i>[In written response the applicants provided definitions that were not submitted with the original application. P 1]</i></p> <p>P 14 <i>[Written response provides new information. Only clarifications that were requested in the preliminary analysis are permissible]</i></p> <p>P 14 <i>[The written response provides new information.]</i></p> |

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| <p><u>Explanation of Need</u> The explanation of how the proposed charter school is in the best interest of the community lacks information that would provide a comprehensive picture of the educational experiences of the mostly Native American students it anticipates serving. While information on Gallup-McKinley County Schools is clearly presented, the application does not mention educational options provided by—nor does it address the results of—the BIA schools that serve those grade levels in the Gallup area.</p> | <p>Pp. 14-17 <i>[The written response provides new information.]</i></p> |
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II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The educational plan should describe who the school expects to serve; what the students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience in terms of educational climate, structure, materials, schedule, assessment and outcomes.

ANALYSIS: CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Philosophy and Approach to Instruction</u> While this section suggests that research supports the educational model, the specific conclusions stated are not all clearly tied to a particular study and/or these studies are not consistently cited in this section.</p> | <p>P 20-22 <i>[Written response provides new information.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Description of the Curriculum</u> Applicants provide reasonable detail on how the curriculum for the four annual learning expeditions will be developed, but do not clarify the duration of the expeditions.</p> <p>On page 40, it states that the school will provide an “<i>integrated and comprehensive math curriculum and language arts (reading) program.</i>” Page 46 indicates that along with homeroom, Reading and Math will be implemented as separate from the learning expeditions. However, the application provides very little information regarding the curriculum, the curricular approach and how these programs fit into the overall framework.</p> <p>While the school day schedule includes time specifically dedicated to Art/Music/PE, the application does not provide a plan for development or purchase of the Art/Music/PE curriculum.</p> | <p>P 23 <i>[The written response clarifies the duration of the learning expeditions. P 4]</i></p> <p>Pp. 40 & 46 <i>[The written response includes new information.]</i></p> <p>schedule on P 46 <i>[Written response provides new information].</i></p> |

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| <p><u>Alignment with NM Standards</u> The application is incomplete in describing the process of curriculum alignment—as defined in the 2010 NM Charter School Application glossary. It does not elaborate on who will be responsible for what action steps or suggest what the final alignment document will contain.</p> <p>It is unclear what “<i>analysis</i>” has occurred in the “example <i>standards analysis</i>” on pages 29-39 as these appear to be the list of standards by subject and grade level.</p> | <p>Pp. 29-39 <i>[The written response provided by applicants provides new information.]</i></p> <p>P 41</p> <p>P. 42</p> |
| <p><u>Strategies and Methods</u> The application makes reference to some strategies and methods that are not clearly defined. For example, the distinction and specific use for “<i>investigations, learning experiences and daily lesson plans</i>” on page 41 is not provided.</p> <p>The list of “<i>active pedagogy strategies</i>” on page 42 (Science Talks, Gallery Walks, Tableaus, etc.) are not defined.</p> | <p><i>[On page 5 of the written response provided by the applicant references new information.]</i></p> |

ANALYSIS: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Length of School Day and School Year</u></p> <p><u>Grade Levels, Class Size and Projected Enrollment</u> The numbers provided on page 46 are confusing when you move from Year 2 to Year 3. It is unclear how adding one additional class of 19 students moves the school from having 168 to 196 students.</p> <p><u>Graduation Requirements (if applicable)</u> Not Applicable.</p> | <p>P 46 <i>[Applicant response does not provide clarification.]</i></p> |

ANALYSIS: STUDENT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Student-centered SMART Goals</u> The instrument(s), defined as “<i>a variety of formative and summative, standards-based assessment tools</i>” used to measure Goal #1 accomplishment is non-specific.</p> <p>The “<i>Habits of Work</i>” in goal #3 is not clearly defined.</p> | <p>P 47 <i>[The response provided by applicants does not satisfy the concern.]</i></p> <p>P 47 <i>[Applicants provide new information.]</i></p> |

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| <u>Alignment</u> | |
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ANALYSIS: PLAN FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Types of Assessments</u> The application does not explain how Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)—the selected short-cycle assessments—fit into the over-all assessment plan.</p> | <p>P 50 <i>[Applicants provide new information but the response does not satisfy the concern.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Timeline for Achievement</u> No timeline for achievement of NM Standards or the school’s performance expectations is presented here.</p> | <p><i>[Though applicants provide a written response to this concern, a specific timeline is not presented P 6.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> | |
| <p><u>Remediation</u> Much of the response to this prompt is a direct quote from a PED publication that defines the SAT process. The application fails to describe how this process would be managed at this particular school.</p> | <p>Pp. 49-50 <i>[Written response provides new information.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Additional Assessments</u></p> | |
| <p><u>Documentation and Reporting</u> The application does not elaborate on how the student led conferences will be structured, how this aligns with the mission goal, what the expectation for parent involvement entails (are they just an audience?).</p> <p>Meaningful detail on the “<i>Celebrations of Learning</i>,” “<i>passage process</i>” and “<i>Habits of Work</i>” (all mentioned in this section) is not provided.</p> | <p>P 51 <i>[Though applicants provide a written response, it does not satisfy concern.]</i></p> <p>P 51 <i>[Applicants provide additional information.]</i></p> |

ANALYSIS: SPECIAL POPULATIONS

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Modifications to meet Individual Student Needs</u> The types of modifications that would be employed to meet individual student’s needs are underdeveloped.</p> | <p>Pp. 53-54 <i>[Page 7 of the written response references new information.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Outline of Special Education Plan</u> The outline of the plan for special education lacks significant detail to understand how the plan will be implemented at this school.</p> <p>Though it lists state and federal requirements, the application does not present information to demonstrate an understanding that it must comply with them.</p> <p>Plans to have the Curriculum and Special Education Team Leader as the SAT coordinator is in conflict with PED’s SAT Guide which clearly states that the SAT is not part of the school’s special education process, but rather part of the responsibility of regular education. Page 46 of the SAT Guide also states that “A special education professional may serve on the SAT, but must not serve as the SAT Chairperson or Supervisor.”</p> <p>A suggestion of a potential relationship with Gallup-McKinley Schools to “carry out a plan for special education” is made, but the application does not provide evidence that the school understands its responsibility as an LEA for delivering services to special education students.</p> | <p>P 54</p> <p>Pp. 53-54 <i>[Applicant provided new information.]</i></p> <p>P 54 <i>[Written response provides new information.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Access to Ancillary Services</u> While the application states that the school “may” contract with providers of ESL services, counseling services and health services, it does not elaborate on this plan nor does it address contracting with ancillary service providers that special education students may need (Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech...etc.).</p> | |

III. FINANCIAL PLAN

The Financial Plan should provide a description of how the school leadership intends to manage the school’s finances, including assurances that public funds will be used appropriately and in compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements and laws. It should present a clear picture of the school’s financial viability including the soundness of revenue projections; expenditure requirements; and how well the school’s budget aligns with and supports implementation of the mission and educational plan.

ANALYSIS: BUDGET

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Revenue Projection Form 910B5</u></p> <p><u>5-Year Budget Plan</u></p> <p><u>Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions</u> The operating budget narrative does not mention special education and ancillary service providers that special education students may need (Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech...etc.).</p> <p>The amounts budgeted for related contract services, legal services, and employee travel seems low.</p> <p>The application does not describe how staff will receive training or present a plan to purchase the programs for student discipline.</p> | <p><i>[Written response provides new information.]</i></p> <p>Pp. 55-57 and Appendix C</p> <p><i>[Written response clarifies the issue of funding to support the discipline plan.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Revenue Sources Other Than SEG Funds</u></p> <p>Applicants do not explain why it might be reasonable for the school to receive a <i>Navajo Coordinated School Health</i> grant of \$40,000 or for the Advisory Council to raise at least \$10,000/year.</p> <p><u>Expenditure Assumptions for Other Than SEG Funds</u></p> | <p>P 60</p> |

ANALYSIS: FISCAL MANAGEMENT

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Fiscal Management Plan</u> The plan to contract with the NM Coalition for Charter Schools does not address how the school itself will manage the fiscal responsibilities to which they are accountable.</p> | <p>P 61 <i>[Written response provides additional information.]</i></p> |
| <p><u>Internal Control Procedures</u> Internal control procedures name the following staff positions: Business Manager, Business Office Bookkeeper, Assistant Business Office Bookkeeper (page 65), Assistant Business Manager, Accounting Specialist (page 70), Director and School Administrative Assistant. Other than the Director and School Administrative Assistant all the positions appear to be staff of the identified contractor. Therefore, the school has provided a plan that is dependent upon this contractor’s organizational business office structure and the internal controls of the contractor’s business office. This lack of information regarding what</p> | <p>Pp. 61-80</p> |

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| will occur at the school site, does not ensure the school will have the necessary internal control procedures to safeguard the funds for which they are responsible. | |
| <u>Annual Audit of Financial Operations</u> The application states that the Audit committee will make a recommendation on the selection of the auditors, however, in actuality, the PED, not the school, selects the auditor for State-chartered schools. | P 80 |

IV. GOVERNANCE /MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Governance/Management Plan should provide an understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. It should present a clear picture of the school’s governance and management practices, what roles and responsibilities various groups and individuals will have, and how those groups will relate to one another. The Plan should outline how decisions are made at the school site, and provide a convincing picture of the school leadership’s capacity to successfully operate the school. In addition, the governing body of a charter school is, first and foremost, publicly accountable for student academic performance and the expenditure of public funds.

ANALYSIS: GOVERNANCE /MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <u>Governance and site-based management structure</u> The statement about the over-all governance management reads that the Governing Council (GC) and Director are “ <i>expected to engage and sustain active participation in decision-making by staff, students, families and community members</i> ” but does not elaborate on what types of decisions it means. [Emphasis added] | P 81 <i>[Written response clarifies the concern.]</i> |
| <u>Organizational chart and narrative description</u> The narrative does not explain why there is a solid line between Teaching Staff and the Advisory School Council. | P 81 <i>[Written response provides new information.]</i> |

ANALYSIS: DESCRIPTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <u>Governing Body policies and procedures</u> The number of members that can sit on the USEL Governing Council is not specified. The powers and duties of GC <u>officer positions</u> are not described. | <i>[Written response correctly points out that the minimum number of governing body members is specified on page 86 of the application. P 9]</i> |

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| Selection of the GC chair is unclear. The application states that the GC chair shall be “appointed” by GC members. | P 86 |
| The job description for the school director states that s/he would act “ <i>as the chief operating officer of the Governing Council</i> ” but does not elaborate on what that means. | P 92 |
| <u>List of governing body members and qualifications</u> | |
| <u>Staff, families, and community involvement in governance</u> | |

ANALYSIS: SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <u>Job descriptions for all organizational chart positions</u> It is unclear what it means for the Business Manager to “ <i>oversee health and safety</i> ” requirements. | P 92 |
| The Instructional Assistants’ responsibility for “ <i>providing scheduled and unscheduled supervision in classrooms during a teacher’s non-contact time</i> ” is not fully explained. | P 95 |
| <u>Years 1-5 staffing plan with pupil-teacher ratio supporting educational plan</u> The applicant does not explain how the pupil-teacher ratio presented in this chart will support the educational plan for the full-inclusion model proposed. | P 96 |

ANALYSIS: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <u>School’s personnel policies and procedures</u> Personnel policies do not mention beginning teacher mentorship program, absence/leave, and other policies to make this section comprehensive. | P 97-99 |
| <u>Proposed salary schedules for all employees</u> | |
| <u>Evaluation process for staff</u> Though the application contains a list of evidence that may be used as part of the evaluation, the description of the evaluation process is vague. Though it makes reference to the PDP this section does not demonstrate an understanding of how it relates to the evaluation process. | P 101 |
| <u>Staff discipline process</u> | |

ANALYSIS: STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>School enrollment policies and procedures</u> This section lacks meaningful detail about the “<i>application form</i>” it references which is a key part of the enrollment procedures.</p> | Pp. 102-103 |
| <p><u>Description of lottery process</u> The application indicates that students need to submit “<i>a completed application</i>” and “<i>attend an in-person meeting</i>” prior to being included in the lottery drawing. This practice does not conform to federal and state guidance.</p> | Pp. 102-103 <i>[Written response provided by applicants does not satisfy the concern.]</i> |
| <p><u>Description of proposed student discipline policy</u> The student discipline policy may include the various strategies listed in this section, however, because the application does not clearly state what strategies will be used, this section is underdeveloped and not comprehensive.</p> | Pp. 104-105 |
| <p><u>Proposed student discipline procedures (appendix)</u> The discipline procedures in Appendix B do not align with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Act.</p> | Appendix B |

ANALYSIS: FACILITIES – IF “NO”

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Explanation of needs of a facility that will support educational plan</u></p> <p><u>Reasonable plan to identify and secure an adequate facility</u> The plan for securing a facility mentions that the school will hire a “<i>start-up year Coordinator.</i>” Details about this position are lacking.</p> | P 106 <i>[Written response provides new information.]</i> |
| <p><u>Proposed capital outlay needs</u></p> | |

ANALYSIS: OTHER STUDENT SERVICE

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>Transportation</u></p> | |
| <p><u>Food Services</u></p> | |
| <p><u>Student access to other services</u></p> | |

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| While the application states that the school will contract for student services, it does not provide any details for how that will occur. | Pp. 108-109 |
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V. REQUIREMENTS

The Requirements section of the application addresses the necessary arrangements that school leaders must make to define the respective legal liability and responsibility of the governing body and the Public Education Department. These requirements include, but are not limited to, securing appropriate insurance coverage and identifying waivers that will be sought by the school from the Public Education Department.

ANALYSIS: WAIVERS

| Criteria Not Sufficiently Addressed, Concerns & Additional Questions | Reference |
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| <p><u>List of waivers that will be requested from PED</u></p> <p>The applicant has listed waivers that do not align with the educational plan provided. For example, the application indicated that it would seek a waiver for driver's education; however, since the school is only serving students up to the 8th grade, this waiver would not be necessary.</p> | Pp. 110-111 |
| <p><u>Other waivers not pertaining to PED waivers that will be requested from PED; must include applicable statute and/or state rule to be waived</u></p> <p>While the applicants do not identify other waivers, they include a section entitled "<i>Other Requirements.</i>" These paragraphs are inappropriate and seem to be based on the assumption that the school can determine what is considered a material term of the charter and what is not. Defining the charter's material terms is not a decision of the school but rather the authorizer and these statements are contrary to NMSA 1978 22-8B-9E.</p> | P 111 |